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The Life of St. Leonard of Port Maurice

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1. His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, who sent the Apostolic Blessing on the occasion of the Corner-stone Laying of the New Church.
2. His Holiness Pope Pius X, who sent the Apostolic Blessing on the occasion of the Consecration of the New Church.
3. Right Rev. Michael F. Egan, O. S. F., first Bishop of Philadelphia.
4. Right Rev. John N. Neumann, C. SS. R., under whom this, the first Italian Church was started.
5. Rev. Gaetano Mariani, O. S. F., founder and first Pastor of the Old Italian Church.
6. Most Rev. James F. Wood, D. D., first Archbishop of Philadelphia, who approved of the building of the New Church.
7. Right Rev. Jeremiah F. Shanahan, D. D., who laid the Corner-stone of the New Church, *Sede vacante*.
8. His Excellency Most Rev. Diomede Falconio, Apostolic Delegate, who consecrated the New Church.
9. His Grace Most Rev Patrick J. Ryan, D. D., who presided at the Pontifical Mass and made an address.
10. Right Rev. Edmond F. Prendergast, D. D., Auxiliary Bishop of Philadelphia, who celebrated the Pontifical Mass.

THE LIFE

OF

ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE

MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC OF THE ORDER OF
REFORMED FRIARS MINOR

OF THE

RETREAT OF ST. BONAVENTURE, ROME

F 922.5
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Translated from the Italian of

FATHER GIUSEPPE MARIA DA MASSERANO

A Religious of the above Retreat

BY THE

REV. ANTONIO ISOLERI, AP. MISS.

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✠ Patritius Joannes Ryan,
Archiep. Philadelphien.

FOREWORD.

"*Redde Altissimo vota tua*"—"Pay thy vows to the Most High" (Ps. xlix, 14). Because of special devotion to this great Apostolic Man of the eighteenth century, St. Leonard of Port Maurice,—and in order to obtain, through his intercession, some *special graces*, I undertook to translate and publish his LIFE and RESOLUTIONS. He was born in my native diocese, and my father often told me that his grandfather heard the Saint preach in Ortovero, near my birthplace. I recollect very well the time of his Canonization (in 1867), when, whilst at the Brignole-Sale College for foreign missions, in Genoa, I took up the lyre and sang a song in his honor.

Two of the graces I asked have been fully received; they were, that I might live to and fittingly celebrate the Tercentenary of the Death of our St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi, and have the New Church under her title solemnly consecrated. (1)

We all know—and it might well be *said weeping* to-day, as St. Paul said it when writing to the Philippians (iii, 18, 19)—

(1) The first Italian Catholic Church of St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi in Philadelphia, which was also the first Italian Church in the United States (now replaced by the new one), was commenced by Father Mariani, O. S. F., under the Ven. Bishop John Nepomucene Neumann, in 1852, and completed in 1857. The corner-stone of the New Church was laid, *Sede vacante*, by the late Right Rev. Jeremiah F. Shanahan, Bishop of Harrisburg, on October 14th, 1883; the Holy Father Leo XIII, of holy memory, sending by cable a special blessing, through Cardinal Simeoni, Prefect of Propaganda. (A Parochial School, a new Rectory, and a Library and Reading-Room have since been built; the former Rectory, built in 1873, now having been turned over to the St. M. M. De-Pazzi's Orphan Asylum for Girls, established in 1876.) The Basement of the New Church was solemnly blessed on February 8th, 1885, by His Grace Archbishop Patrick John Ryan; and the Church proper was dedicated by him on June 28th, 1891—Right Rev. Winand M. Wigger, Bishop of Newark, an alumnus of the Brignole-Sale College, singing the Pontifical Mass and preaching on the occasion.

The New Church was solemnly consecrated on Sunday, May 26th, 1907, by His Excellency Archbishop Diomede Falconio, the Apostolic Delegate. The Most Rev. Archbishop P. J. Ryan presided and made an address at the Solemn Pontifical Mass, which was celebrated by the

that this is an age very *unfriendly to the Cross of Christ;* to that Cross, the "Way" of which St. Leonard so earnestly promoted by word and example, as almost to appear to have been the Founder of that beautiful devotion, the *Via Crucis.*

Of course, it is not expected that any of the readers of this, his LIFE and RESOLUTIONS, will become *very close* imitators of this great Apostolic Missionary and rigorously austere Saint. But it may be hoped, at least, that the perusal of this book will lead some of the clergy and the people to pray even more fervently "the Lord of the harvest, that He send laborers into His harvest" (Luke x, 2) like unto St. Leonard, and grant all a spark of that spirit of prayer, of zeal, of self-denial and mortification, without which, modern society—weak in faith (if not unbelieving), indifferent and ease-loving—will become more and more dechristianized, and, finally, pagan and past rescuing.

Nay, may we not add that, without this spirit of prayer, zeal and mortification, not only one cannot expect to convert and save others, but cannot expect to save himself? Did not the Lord say—HE HIMSELF FIRST CARRYING THE CROSS—"*If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me*" (Matt. xvi, 24)? He who preaches must preach CHRIST CRUCIFIED by example and word as did Our Lord, who BEGAN TO DO AND TO TEACH (Acts i, 1); and

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Right Rev. Edmond F. Prendergast, Bishop Auxiliary, in the presence of many of the clergy and a large number of people; the Rev. Serafino Pierotti, O. M. C., of Hoboken, N. J., preached the sermon.

Solemn Pontifical Vespers were sung by the Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Falconio, who also addressed the congregation, and then blessed and placed on the head of the Statue of St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi a halo of gold and precious stones, made from votive offerings for graces received. The *Te Deum* and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament closed the never-to-be-forgotten ceremonies of the day.

On Monday, May 27th, Mass was sung for all the living and deceased benefactors of the parish, and, on the following Wednesday, for all the deceased members of the same.

On Sunday, June 2d, there were Solemn High Mass and Vespers. The panegyric of the Saint was delivered by the above-mentioned Father Pierotti, O. M. C. There was a Solemn Procession, in which all the Church Societies participated, with their banners, statues, and bands—many people making votive offerings and some walking barefooted (for graces received) after the Statue of the Titular Saint and Patron, St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi.

This result alone would have more than justified my undertaking this publication.

as did St. Leonard, and all the Apostles, and all truly successful preachers. (1) And, like the Apostle, the preacher must be able to say, in part at least—*I "fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church"* (Coloss. i, 24)—or else his preaching the penance will be as if to the *wilderness*, and "*become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal*" (I Cor. xiii, 1). He must also be as little burdensome as possible, as St. Paul (Acts xx, 34; I Thess. ii, 9; II Thess. iii, 8) and St. Leonard and all truly great missionaries have been.

But, alas! how true it is to-day that the *language of the Cross* is not understood by many; just as the Apostles *understood not the things that were said* (Luke xviii, 34) when the Divine Master spoke to them of His approaching Passion. Not by *passive virtue*, nor by *persuasive words of human wisdom* (I Cor. ii, 4), will sinners be converted. The order given (not without reason) by the great Pontiff Leo XIII, of holy memory, to recite, daily, after low Mass, a Prayer to St. Michael, *against Satan and all the evil spirits prowling around the world and seeking the destruction of souls*, still holds good under the present Pope Pius X. And the need for it appears even more palpably every day, on account of the devastating torrent of spiritism, the deluge of divorces, the fierce propagandism and ravages of infidelity, the Dead Sea of immorality, the crass ignorance and Satanic hatred of Religion (one knows not which is the greater), the fiery and yawning abyss of anarchy, the brazen profanation of holy things; the utter disregard of the sacred rights of property, life, and even fame—at least in certain places—which look like the harbingers of the "*dangerous*" (II Tim. iii, 1 *et seq.*) "*last times*" (I Tim. iv, 1; St. Jude 18)—portending, as it were, the *Religio Depopulata*, notwithstanding the saintly *Ignis Ardens'* "*Instaurare omnia in Christo.*" "He that readeth, let him understand" (Matt. xxiv, 15). Hence, together with the fact of Our Lord's *doing and teaching*, His other words should be remembered to-day more than ever by the preacher, viz., that there are *some devils that*

(1) LIFE, chapter sixteenth, page 116. "St. Leonard was one of those preachers who, uniting the eloquence of his words with the efficacy of his virtuous actions, preach by word and example."

cannot be cast out, except by prayer and fasting (Mark ix, 28). Neither should the words of the Prince of the Apostles ever be forgotten: "*Feed the flock of God which is among you; taking care thereof not by constraint, but willingly according to God; neither for the sake of filthy lucre, but voluntarily: . . . being made a pattern of the flock from the heart. And when the Prince of pastors shall appear, you shall receive a never-fading crown of glory*" (I Peter v, 2–4).

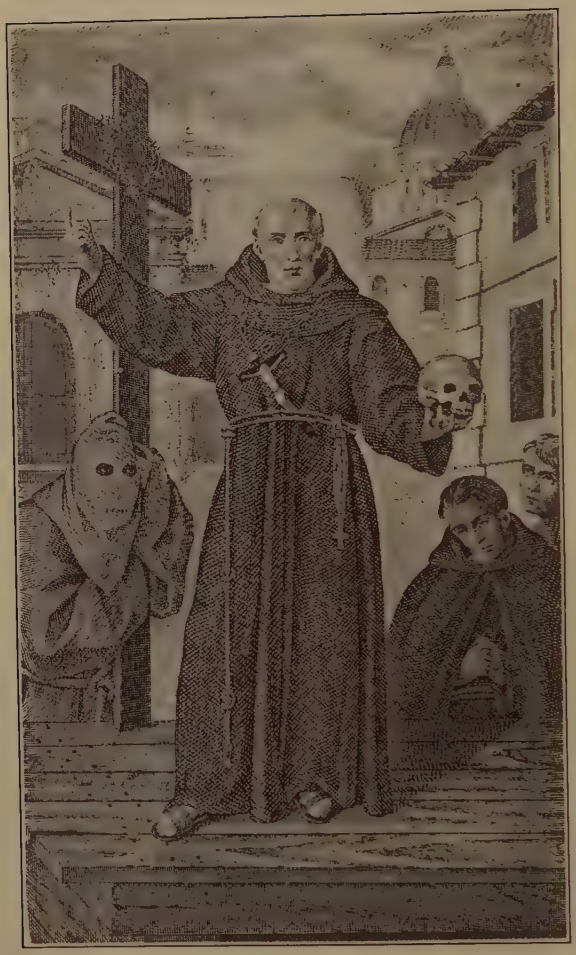
As to the people, they must not be like those Jews of old who were saying to the seers: "*See not; and to them that behold: Behold not for us those things that are right; speak unto us pleasant things* [as false prophets and Modernists do, catering to the pleasure-loving people]; *see errors for us*" (Isaias xxx, 10). Alas! indeed it occasionally seems as if we had reached the time foretold by the Apostle, when he said: "*For there shall be a time when they will not endure sound doctrine; but according to their own desires they will heap to themselves teachers having itching ears. And will indeed turn away their hearing from the truth, but will be turned unto fables*" (II Tim. iv, 3, 4).

If the people are to profit by the word of God, they ought also to shun *novelties*, the very names of which St. Paul tells Timothy to avoid (I Tim. vi, 20, 21)—*avoiding the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called, which some promising, have erred concerning the faith.* And they must receive the *word in good and perfect heart* (Luke viii, 15) as the seed that *fell in good ground, and bring forth fruit in patience;* in order, too, that they who preach *it* (*and are to render an account of their souls*) *may do this with joy, and not with grief. For this is not expedient for the people* (Heb. xiii, 17).

May the Lord save us all, through the intercession of this, His beloved Servant, St. Leonard—hundreds of the like of whom would not be too many, if the Church had them to-day in his native land and elsewhere.

THE TRANSLATOR.

PHILADELPHIA, April 8th, 1908: the First Centennial Anniversary of the Establishment of the Diocese of Philadelphia by His Holiness Pius VII.



ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE

PREACHING THE PENANCE.

Preface to the Fourth Italian Edition.

DEVOUT READER,

ON the memorable occasion of the Solemn Canonization of the Blessed Leonardo of Porto Maurizio, of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, it was decided to publish the history of his life, and it was deemed opportune, therefore, to issue, for the fourth time, the one which was written and published at the time of the Beatification of our Hero by the Postulator of the Cause at that time, the Reverend Father Giuseppe Maria of Masserano, a Religious of the same Retreat. But to this was added the narration of the two miracles that God wrought through the intercession of the Saint.

Nothing need be said of the style of the writer, nor of the other merits of his book, with the exception of the spiritual ones, which we should seek chiefly in books like this, in order to derive true and lasting benefit therefrom. And yet I cannot pass in silence the easy and natural style, by which, although restricting itself to the simple and mere recital of the facts, it always pleases and attracts, never tiring the reader with too studied eloquence, nor many long and sometimes inopportune remarks.

Hence, I cherish the hope that thou shalt welcome this book, which, in St. Leonard, proposes a model well worthy of being imitated, not only by all the claustrals, and particularly those engaged in giving the Holy Missions, but likewise by those who, living in the midst of secular occupations, believe it impossible to aim at perfection and unite the active with the contemplative life. . . . Nay, every Christian may derive some spiritual profit from a perusal of this book.

PART FIRST.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Birth, Birthplace and Parents of St. Leonard, and what he did in his early years.

THE path of the just, according to the Holy Ghost (Prov. iv, 18), is like unto that of the sun, which sheds light as soon as it appears on the horizon, and, gradually rising, increases to a perfect day. Such was of truth the career of the holy man whose life I undertake to describe ; viz., that of St. Leonard, who, as soon as he appeared among mortals, and subsequently, during his early years, gave clear tokens of the heroic sanctity he was to attain. In fact he showed, at an early date, that God had enriched him with the blessings of His grace and chosen him to accomplish great things. He continued to increase in every virtue, so that in his adult age he sent forth such luminous rays from them, that it became evident that he, at last, had reached the goal of the most consummate and sublime perfection. And this will also appear from the reading of this history, by me divided into two parts ; the first containing the works performed by him in public, in sight of those who had the privilege of seeing and admiring him, beginning and carrying out the narrative from his birth to his death ; and the second treating of his virtues, including those which, though interior, often transpired outwardly, and those gratuitous gifts wherewith the Lord abundantly enriched him.

St. Leonard, then, was born in Port Maurice, Diocese of Albenga, on the Riviera di Ponente, subject then to the Republic of Genova, now part of the Royal States of Sardinia, and was baptized on the same day in the illustrious Collegiate Church of St. Maurice, receiving the name of Paul Jerome. His parents were Domenico Casanuova and Anna Maria Benza, persons of

civil condition, of the same city, and sufficiently provided with this world's goods; very virtuous and God-fearing, especially the father, who, being the captain of a ship, in order not to expose his chastity to any danger, had made a vow never to admit a woman among his passengers. He kept this vow so faithfully that, at one time, being compelled by strong obligations to carry one from Genova, though she was of irreproachable conduct, he left his ship in charge of his sailors and returned on foot to his native place, about eighty miles from Genova, traveling in the winter by roads and mountains well-nigh impassable. His first wife, the mother of our Saint, having died when he was only two years old, Domenico Casanuova contracted a second marriage with Maria Riolfo, of Artallo, who bore him four children, three boys and a girl. The first of the three boys studied medicine for a short time, but finally determined to become a religious, thus imitating St. Leonard of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure in Rome. He embraced the same Order and took the name of Fra Antonio, dying in this Order as a priest, after many years of exemplary life. The second remained in the world, and the third took also the habit of the Reformed Friars Minor, of the province of Tuscany, in San Francesco del Palco, near Prato, at the hands of his holy brother, when the latter was guardian of that convent. The girl, leaving the world also, became a Dominican nun in the Monastery of St. Catherine, in Taggia, taking the name of Sr. Mary Magdalen. These were the five fruits God condescended to grant in two marriages to good Domenico Casanuova.

This virtuous man, who, by words and deeds, was wont to teach his sailors the Christian tenor of life, as everyone should do, who has persons subject to him, passed to a better life with the fame of his good works, as of a person truly Christian. He was esteemed as one who took the greatest care of the education of his children, and particularly of Paul Jerome, in whom he early discovered the shining rays of a supernatural light, which pleasantly convinced him that the boy had been blessed with a good soul, created for Paradise. In fact, Domenico rejoiced to observe the disposition of his tender child, wholly given to piety, and wished to cultivate it by attending personally to his educa-

tion; but, on reflecting that this would be impossible, because very often his business called him away from home, he recommended the work to his own father, Gianpaolo Casanuova, a very devout man and of good morals; although, when at home, he did not neglect to attend to it himself, as a good father, directing and encouraging the boy to do good and to take delight in the things of God, towards which he found him daily more and more inclined.

Young Leonard, from his tenderest years, was averse to enjoyment and childish amusements, and intent in his own home, only upon building small altars and arranging processions, inviting the children of his own age to take part; to whom, after reciting together some prayers and singing some devout praises, he often gave brief discourses and sermons. It was a cause of astonishment to see a little child reciting, morning and evening, with extraordinary fervor, the Rosary and other prayers, always desirous of rendering due honor and worship to the most holy Virgin. This was enjoyed by his stepmother, of whom the Saint in later years was wont to say that God, having deprived him of his own mother, had given him a stepmother who, in the absence of his father, had never caused him sorrow while he was under her guardianship and care, which was for about ten years. Speaking of his own father, he used to say that, had he not received from him a pious education, he did not know what might have become of him; and concluded by thanking the Lord for having given him so good a father. On account of his exact obedience to all at home, and the unmistakable tokens of piety and devotion he gave in his childhood days, he was tenderly beloved by his stepmother no less than by his father, and also by all who saw and admired him.

The singular devotion which from his tenderest years he professed towards the Blessed Virgin, always continued to increase, so that, besides honoring her with his little altars, prayers and Rosary, he often went barefooted with other children to visit the Church of the Madonna (so called) dei Piani, situated about two miles outside of Port Maurice. There he gave vent to his devotion, particularly at the time that the earthquake was afflicting the city of Naples, when he fervently prayed the great Mother

of God to free his country from such a calamity. In company with the same children he also visited other churches, instilling in his little companions devotion to the most holy Madonna. After reciting with them various prayers, he instructed them, as well as he knew how, in the Christian doctrine, and strove in this manner to keep them away from the occasions of sin.

One day he was returning from Oneglia, and with some companions was walking along the seashore, when he met a captain who had anchored his ship there. The man on seeing our Saint, then in his tenth year, and the other youths his companions, at first tried to caress them by words and presents, and afterwards manifesting the evil designs he harbored in his heart, attempted to seize them by force. Those innocent little ones, surprised by so untoward an occurrence, and filled with just fear at finding themselves, like tender lambs under the paws of that most ferocious wolf in a lonely place, started to run away—which is the surest means of overcoming such dangers. The first one to run, after having given to the others the signal to follow him, was our Saint; and he was promptly obeyed, all the others imitating him as quickly as they could. The wicked captain seeing himself deluded, and burning with blind rage, began to pursue them, sword in hand; but, although he ran swiftly, he could not catch any of them. All of them, out of breath, arrived safely at the borough of the marina of Port Maurice. Having thus reached a safe place, our young Leonard went directly to the Church, there to thank the Lord for having delivered him from so grave a danger, and from there he proceeded barefooted to the Madonna dei Piani, about two miles distant, as we have already said, to acknowledge the grace he had received through the intercession of Mary.

In one word, Leonard was a boy altogether given to piety and devotion, who might have been justly called the model of all the children of his age, and who took the utmost care to avoid sin and preserve his innocence. Neither did he spend his first years in the exercises of religion only, but he also attended the school in his native place, and with so much diligence and profit that, according to his teacher himself, he earned praises and prizes; thus espousing from his childhood the love and prac-

tice of virtue, together with the study of the first rudiments of the humanities, he gave all observers clearly to understand that God was preparing him and intended him for great things in his adult age, and that in the course of time he was to reach a very eminent degree of perfection. Nay, it was generally remarked and concluded that the Lord had filled him, his Servant, with special grace of piety and virtuous living from his earliest years; for, even at that time, his obedience to his superiors and his progress in study and virtue caused all the people of Port Maurice, as well as all others who knew him, to form a very high opinion of him.

CHAPTER SECOND.

Arrival at Rome of St. Leonard, and his life as a layman in the Eternal City.

WHEN our Saint had arrived at the age of twelve or thirteen years, the fame of his spotless life, his rare talent and his excellent disposition reached the ears of Agostino Casanuova, a well-to-do man and his paternal uncle, who lived in Rome; and he sent for Leonard in order that he might lead a truly Christian life and advance in the studies of the humanities in that city. He was not disappointed in his expectations; for, having sought out a wise teacher, endowed with all those qualifications needed in one who is to train youth, and a pious confessor, such as was Father Grifonelli of the Chiesa Nuova, young Leonard made, in a short time, such progress in his studies and in virtue that he fully won the heart of his uncle. In fact, though the latter had two sons, entirely different in disposition from his nephew, he, observing Leonard's love of school, his deportment, his love of retirement, his devotion and other amiable qualities, began to treat him with an affection greater even than that which he accorded his own children. To the love of the uncle the good nephew corresponded with perfect

submission, obeying exactly all his commands, and profiting by the advice that, as a wise and very good man, he from time to time gave him.

At the end of three years of private school, Agostino proposed to send his nephew to the Collegio Romano, where he was to have, as a teacher, one of the most renowned for goodness and learning, viz., the Jesuit Father Tolomei, who, later on, because of his merits, was made Cardinal of Holy Church. Leonard was to study there for some time under this worthy preceptor, and, later on, under others of the same institution, and with such great profit that he was deemed capable of publicly teaching the Christian doctrine in Church. He had reached the age of about sixteen years, when, from the private school of a priest, the Rev. Francesco Santoleri, who had taught him grammar, Leonard passed to the Collegio Romano, where, for the first two years, he studied the humanities and rhetoric ; and from there he went to the Minerva, where the Sommole (compendiums) were dictated to him ; after which he returned to the Collegio Romano, where he completed the whole course of philosophy, studying moral philosophy under the above-named Father Tolomei.

Whilst studying logic he began to frequent the Oratorio of Father Caravita, which, later, he joined, being numbered among the twelve members of that congregation who, as being more devout and zealous for the salvation of souls, were appointed to teach the catechism in the churches, and, on Sundays and feast-days, to bring the persons who were idling through the city, to the sermons and the missions. For this reason they were styled "The Twelve Apostles."

It was then that our Leonard gave himself in a special manner to the spiritual and devout life, approaching the Sacraments in the above Oratorio on all feast-days, and forming the habit of recommending his soul to God every morning and evening, as if during that day or night he must die. He was modest, humble, pious, studious and diligent, and was never known to utter a word nor commit an action that was sinful, or one that might give scandal and cause remark. All his discourses with his companions were upon devout topics, piety and study, so much so that, because of his virtue and exemplary life, he was

the model of all the youths that frequented the Collegio Romano, being to everybody a source of edification and good example. Loving solitude and retirement, he had few companions; but those whom he had were well-behaved and religious, such as one should try to know, avoiding the evil ones. He chose the former in order to preserve his innocence and avoid pitfalls. In this our Saint succeeded to perfection, and, discoursing in later years of his early life spent in the world, he was wont to say that, by God's grace, he had then had teachers, confessors and companions blessed with talent and living piously. One of these latter, dearer to him than the rest (he added), was Luigi Foggia, a gilder by profession, of whose virtues the Servant of God related great things, taking delight in having had for a friend and companion, a man who discoursed to him only of Paradise, and from whom he had learned the great maxim, that, in order not to fall into any acts of impatience or other faults, one must constantly keep God before his eyes.

Concerning this Luigi (who, according to the testimony of the same Servant of God, ended his days with a very enviable death), he also related that one morning he was invited to go with him to hear a sermon. On the way they saw a criminal hanging from the gallows, at which sight Luigi said to him: "Son, this is a sermon! Whoever leads a bad life is sooner or later reached by the justice of God, for a man who has not the fear of God, is capable of committing all sorts of iniquities." At such a spectacle, and hearing these words, the Servant of God (as he concluded) was very much touched and conceived a greater loathing for sin.

Pietro Mirè was another young man who, because of his good qualities, was a friend of St. Leonard. He had been his fellow-student in the Collegio Romano, and afterwards became a most exemplary priest. In a statement which he left concerning the Servant of God, he says of him many things above related, and adds that when the Saint used to take him on vacation days to the vineyard of his uncle, Agostino, beyond the Salara, he made him recite the Rosary of the Madonna along the road, in order to begin the recreation with an exercise of piety and devotion. This friendship lasted for five years, during which

the Saint, being (as already stated) enrolled in the Oratorio of Father Caravita, was chosen to be one of the band called "The Twelve Apostles," and was the cause of the greatest edification to all his co-disciples and companions of the same institution. So great was their admiration, that a number flocked to him to be instructed in the observance of the rules of the Congregation, which he kept with the greatest exactitude, while he fixed his eyes upon the virtues of the most exemplary members, that he might imitate and surpass them, if possible; doing everything with such devotion and singular fervor that it seemed heroic. In order to accomplish the work for which the Congregation had appointed him, he was accustomed to go, on feast-days, through the piazzas and other public places of Rome, exhorting the people to attend the sermons or the missions which, according to the seasons, were preached by the Jesuit Fathers in certain designated churches. He was but seventeen years of age when he entered this Retreat, and yet he acted the rôle of an Apostle with so much humility, zeal and modesty that he succeeded wonderfully, bringing many from the public streets to the church. He never forsook the holy work, nor became discouraged, although he was often insulted by the vile and injurious words of impious idlers and libertines.

His great devotion was not satisfied with the many exercises of piety that were practiced by him, especially in the Oratorio of Father Caravita, but he enrolled himself also in that of St. Filippo Neri in the Chiesa Nuova. Here, as already stated, he had for his confessor Father Grifonelli, and here also he performed all the acts of Christian piety that, with the greatest profit to souls, were there practiced. Moreover, fully intent upon practicing those virtues that were more suitable to his youthful age, he often read the Filotea of St. Francesco di Sales, which he always carried about, professing a singular devotion to this Saint. He frequented the most holy Sacraments, and experienced his greatest delight in visiting the churches and hearing the sermons, parts of which he retained in his memory and repeated to the domestics at home; therefore, from this time, he was commonly esteemed to be a young man of solid piety and greatest virtue.

When he became adult, in the spirit of humility, he used to relate that he had made, while still a layman, his general confession to said Father Grifonelli in the same interior cell that had once been occupied by St. Filippo Neri, and that God had vouchsafed to grant him so much contrition that, experiencing an entire change of heart, he felt growing in his soul the love of austerities and penance; then he would humbly add that, in those days, he had a little fervor, but that since then he had lost it all. When preaching in Rome in the year 1749, while exhorting the people to preserve and increase God's grace, he recommended, among other things calculated to attain this end, that they join some religious congregation, assuring all that he was speaking from experience, for, he declared, that the little good he had accomplished and his preservation from evil was due to his having become a member of the Oratorio of Father Caravita, and that of the Chiesa Nuova of the Filippine Fathers, in his early years.

While working in these congregations he became so inflamed with the love of virtue and the desire to suffer and mortify his body, that when he returned home to his uncle, full of fervor, he could only discourse upon spiritual subjects, particularly the life of the Saint whose feast happened to fall on that day, or else repeat part of the sermons he had listened to in the Oratorio or the Church. This he generally did in the evening during supper-time, and would become so interested in it that he would forget to eat. His uncle, seeing, sometimes, that supper was nearly over without his nephew's having tasted anything, was obliged to order him to be silent and eat, adding that all the people present would commence to do their best to imitate the lives of those Saints of whom he had spoken. But some of the guests remarked among themselves that the good young man would surely, in time, become a great preacher; others noticed that, in order to mortify himself, he would spend the hour of supper in these devout discourses, so that the dish, of which he wished to deprive himself, becoming cold, he would have an excuse to pass it, saying that he did not like it cold, in this way hiding the mortification which he wished to practice. He also tried in every way to hide other penances, which he performed to mortify his body and keep it

subject to the spirit, though he could not always succeed in hiding from some of the household the fact that, during the night, he left his bed and slept on the bare floor, resting his head either on the kneeling-stool or upon a stone which he kept hidden in his bedroom, where they also found penitential instruments, such as disciplines and ciliciums, which they knew he used.

Such, in one word, was the tenor of his life. Agostino, his uncle, seeing that he was resolved upon mortifying himself, and that he was of such a retiring disposition, that rather than enter into conversation with others, he shut himself up in his room, began to fear that he might fall into consumption, and wrote to Leonard's father, manifesting his dread to him. This exemplary life of innocence and mortification made him, at home, a source of edification and an example to all ; and many, admiring his virtues and the peculiar fitness which he manifested for the apostolic ministry, formed such a high regard for him that one of them even went so far as to say that he spoke like a Saint and really was one. But, though he took giant strides in the path of salvation, even while in the world, still, the better to serve his God, Leonard resolved to correspond to the voice which for some time had been calling him to the religious state, feeling the necessary interior vocation to follow it.

CHAPTER THIRD.

He manifests his vocation to become a Religious, and the difficulties he encounters to follow it.

ST. LEONARD had felt himself interiorly, for some time, called, as we have just said, to embrace the religious life, without, however, making a choice of any particular institution of regulars. He now experienced, in his fervent prayers, which, joined to various mortifications, he offered constantly in order to thoroughly understand the Divine will in this matter,

that this desire was growing daily more and more in his heart; therefore, in the nineteenth year of his age, he determined to manifest his vocation. He first spoke of it to his confessor, Father Grifonelli, who, knowing full well the disposition and goodness of his penitent, at once concluded that this desire for a religious life came from God, and began to try him in many ways, exercising him now in one virtue and now in another, but in each case Leonard corresponded faithfully in everything with prompt obedience. On one occasion, among others, he told him to go to the booksellers of Rome and buy a book for him containing the fables of Æsop, Bertoldo and Bertoldino bound in a single volume. Though the good young man foresaw at once the impossibility of finding such a book, and the jeers which his search would bring upon him, yet he started immediately on a tour to carry out the order, and did not give up his quest until he had actually met with the mockery which he had foreseen. At last, without being in the least disconcerted, he returned to the Chiesa Nuova cheerful and happy, though covered with derision and scorn, telling Father Grifonelli that he had been unable to find the desired book, but that, if he so wished, in spite of all, he would begin again to make more diligent inquiries for it; and when told that, because of his stupidity, he was not capable of finding a thing of such little importance, Leonard never opened his lips to utter a single word of self-defense or exculpation.

During the period in which the prudent director was thus assuring himself of the vocation of our Saint, which he already regarded as genuine, though he had never made public his belief, he exhorted him to ask of God new light, so that he would not make any mistake in an affair of so great importance. This our Saint did, praying all the time with this object in view, and redoubling the penances and mortifications spoken of in the preceding chapter. One day, when crossing the piazza del Gesù, whilst pondering upon what Order he should embrace, he saw there two religious, poor in habit and modest in deportment, who were going their way. This sight both surprised and edified him, and, as he himself afterwards related in speaking of his vocation, they seemed to him like two angels from heaven, and he at once felt a burning desire to embrace their mode of life by

joining their Religion (Religious Order). As he did not know to what Order they belonged, nor where their convent was, he followed them till he saw them enter the Convent or Retreat of St. Bonaventure, inhabited by the Reformed Friars Minor of St. Francis, which was situated above the powder magazine. He, too, entered the adjoining church, just as these religious commenced the recitation of Compline, hearing the opening verse: "*Converte nos Deus, salutaris noster*"—"Convert us, O God, our salvation." He felt his heart wounded at once by these words, and, enlightened at the same time by supernal light, he decided on the spot to embrace this austere institution, saying to himself: "*Hæc est requies mea*"—"This is my resting place" (Ps. cxxxi, 14). Full of joy in consequence of this event, he at once went to see Father Grifonelli, and, after having acquainted him with everything, left it to him to tell him clearly whether it was God's will that he should take this step. The wise Father, who, on being asked by the pious young man before this time, had never given him a definite answer, reflected now on what he had been told and on the fervor with which young Leonard was inflamed, and answered him that his vocation was a genuine one, assuring him that it was God's will that he should enter the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, a place very well known to Father Grifonelli, who also knew how strictly the rules were kept there. All these things came to our notice, because they have been testified to in the Processes by those who heard them on various occasions from the very lips of our Saint, who used to add that Father Grifonelli, after having assured him of the truth of his vocation, the better to encourage and dispose him to follow it, often sent him to St. Bonaventure's, and directed him to make known his mind to certain learned and pious persons, so that he might be even more sure of not being mistaken, and also advised him to follow their counsels.

Leonard most willingly betook himself to three religious, who were then enjoying great renown in Rome, viz., Father Boldigiani, a Jesuit, Father Pio of St. Colomba, of the said Retreat of St. Bonaventure, and a Dominican Father dwelling in St. Sabina's, whose name could not be learned. He sincerely made known to them his desire and all that had happened to

him, as above related ; and, on being told by the whole three of them that his vocation came from God, who willed he should become a Franciscan in the Retreat above mentioned, he firmly purposed to carry out the resolution already made, even in the face of any obstacle or difficulty which he foresaw he would have to encounter. In fact, he himself said afterwards that he met immediately great opposition in the person of his own uncle Agostino, who was no sooner informed of Leonard's intention than, burning with anger, he reproached him bitterly and tried earnestly to dissuade him, telling him that his father, upon hearing of such a determination, would be most heartily displeased, because he had sent him to Rome that he might, as he himself had intended, study medicine, and which he was already practicing a little. Moreover, his uncle endeavored to cross him in every way, now placing before his eyes the austerity of the institution he wished to embrace, now treating him as a hypocrite, and now speaking to him with asperity, superciliousness and indignation. But as his nephew remained firm in his determination, he, as a last resort, cast him out of the house, compelling him to secure lodging with Leonardo Ponzetti, another relative, whom the young man begged to intercede for him with his uncle, in order to obtain the desired permission. This does not appear to have been granted, for the uncle would not even give him the small sum of money necessary for the expenses of the institution, so that Leonard was compelled to beg it from some other relatives of his living in Rome. But his good father acted very differently. Domenico Casanuova felt his heart torn from his breast on reading the letters sent him by his brother and his son, and wept most copiously, thinking he was losing a son whom he loved tenderly and in whom he had placed his fondest hopes. Yet, with those very letters in his hand, he went to the Church, and, kneeling before the altar, made of this son a sacrifice to the Lord, offering him up to Him ; and then he answered the letters by sending his consent, and telling Leonard to do the will of Him who called him to His service.

Satisfied in part with the consent of his father, still Leonard grieved because of the opposition of his uncle, who persisted in not wholly consenting that his nephew should become a religious,

and showed himself angry with the one who was most obedient to his least whim. But Leonard continued to live in the house of Leonardo Ponzetti (grandfather of Rev. Giacinto Ponzetti, private Chaplain of honor to Pope Pius VI, of Holy Memory), where he had received shelter, as has been said, when cast out by his uncle. He begged his host to help him in his resolution, and Leonardo Ponzetti helped him so well that our Leonard, having succeeded through him in accomplishing his purpose, took from him, as we shall see later, in token of gratitude, the name of Leonard.

To the above obstacle another was added, that of his companions and co-disciples, who, as they were very fond of him, placed before him his delicate and sickly constitution, and argued strongly that if as a layman, though well fed and clothed, he was so weak and thin, he never would have strength to bear the austere and rigorous life that was led in the Retreat which he aspired to join. These remarks caused his heart the greatest anguish, for they made him fear that, after having been clothed with the religious habit, it might have to be taken from him again and he be sent away from the novitiate ; however, one day he told his friend Pietro Mirè that, if he should be unable to endure the rigors of the institution, and because of his poor health should be compelled to leave it, he would withdraw to his native place, there to instruct in piety and letters the children of the poor. Thus, always convinced that God intended him for that state, he contined to overcome all difficulties, having recourse to Him in holy prayer ; and, in order to become used to the rigors of the institution, he disciplined himself even more, praying in the meantime for the strength necessary to carry out his holy purpose. God heard his prayer ; for, inspired by Him to omit, for some days, his penances, in a short time he became so strong and robust that he made his fine health an argument to exhort his own companions to bless and thank God, who never fails to help those who trust in Him and ask of Him, with humility and perseverance, the grace that will enable them to serve Him.

All obstacles, then, overcome, Leonard went to the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, and sought out the Superior, the said Father

Pio da St. Colomba, a religious of so much virtue that he founded the Retreat in Florence and there died famous for great piety and perfection. Our Saint knelt at his feet and humbly begged him to admit him into his Order. The Father Guardian, who, when he had first seen him, had noticed his angelic disposition, his humble and wise talk, the sincerity and openness of his heart, and had deemed him worthy of that holy place, did not hesitate to comply with his request. Therefore, he promised him that at the first reception of novices he would be admitted to the Religion, provided he would remain firm in his determination and continue to offer up his prayers to God.

As soon as he received this answer, so consoling to him, he betook himself to the Chiesa Nuova, to make known to his confessor how well his request had been received, and that the hope had been given to him of early reception into the Franciscan Order. Whilst he was still praying to the Lord with even greater earnestness for the happy issue of his cause, the month of September, 1697, arrived, when Leonard was admitted and received in the Convent of St. Francesco a Ripa, as one of the chosen ones, destined for the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, by the Fathers of the Definitorium of the Roman Province, to whom belonged the privilege of receiving the novices. He was then in the twentieth year of his age, which he completed on the 20th of the December following ; and being provided with all that was necessary, and having the faculties required to receive the religious habit, cheerful and jubilant, wholly detached from relatives, friends and the whole world, he left Rome for the Convent of St. Maria, district of Ponticelli, in the Sabina, the place of novitiate for the convents of the Retreat. The only thing he showed anxiety for, when taking his departure from Rome, was his younger brother, whom he recommended to the care of his dear friend, Pietro Mirè. To this friend he entrusted his writings, charging him to give them, when he would be of an age to make use of them, to this brother. The latter, after having studied medicine in Rome for some years, as has also been already stated, became a religious, too, in the same Retreat, under the name of Fr. Antonio. After he had arrived at the Convent of St. Maria delle Grazie, and had been received by the Father

Guardian of that place with great charity, Leonard performed there the spiritual exercises, as is customary with all those who are to receive the religious habit. When the exercises were over, on the 2d day of October, of the year 1697, he was vested, changing the name of Paolo Girolamo into that of Fr. Leonardo, for the reason above mentioned.

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Deportment of St. Leonard as a Novice and as a Student, up to the time when he was made Lecturer of Philosophy.

AS soon as the fervent young man was clothed with the Franciscan habit in the Convent of St. Maria delle Grazie in Ponticelli, as related above, he began the year of his novitiate under the direction of Father Bernardino da Calenzana, a very zealous man, of austere life. He was his master for the space of six months, after which, the change of religious in the respective convents having taken place, Father Cristino da Oneglia took his place, a person likewise very well suited for the charge of Master of Novices. Our Saint was trained in the observances of the Order, and whatever was necessary to the religious life and his spiritual advancement, by these two worthy Fathers. He was also tried with those mortifications which are usually practiced in the Retreat, especially by the novices, in order to find out whether the spirit which led them to Religion is truly from God, though, because of the death of those who were his masters and his fellow-novices, very little information could be obtained of the particular virtues practiced by him during that year. Notwithstanding this, it is well known that Leonard began and continued his novitiate with so much fervor that he was most zealous in the exact fulfillment of the rules and constitutions of the Retreat, and that in his modesty and the practice of all the other virtues he far outshone his companions, even the most fervent, and was an object of admiration and

imitation even to the most advanced, who foresaw from that time the perfect success Leonard would make in Religion. He himself, after having been for some years in the Order, speaking, on various occasions, of his novitiate, was in the habit of calling the day on which he had been clothed with the religious habit the day of his conversion, and of giving to the year of his novitiate the name of Holy Year (Anno Santo). He grieved, in his humility, that he had lost the fervor he then felt, and had gone backward instead of forward in the path of the virtues. It may be, therefore, lawfully inferred that if, with the greatest ardor, he wished to join the religious life to serve God and sanctify himself, his piety must have been very fervent indeed, and he must have been well exercised in all the virtues, for, after advancing in years, steadily increasing in perfection, St. Leonard complained of his lack of fervor, and longed for that which he felt during his novitiate. Such truly it was ; for, edified by his conduct and satisfied with him in every respect, the religious, by a unanimous vote, admitted Leonard to the solemn profession, which he made, after having prepared himself with many prayers, on the second day of October, of the year 1698, in the same Convent of St. Maria delle Grazie, wholly consecrating himself, by the three vows, to the Lord.

As previously, he had determined to employ all his time either in the study of religious perfection, or the reading of spiritual books, and in prayer, or attending to what his religious state required, so he purposed to continue this method of life in the future, which he did in reality without change. He also determined to observe the vows he had made with the greatest possible fidelity. He was, therefore, most diligent in performing exactly not only the most important works prescribed by the rule of St. Francis and the statutes of the Retreat, but also those deemed of slight value, well knowing that the observance of the latter predisposes to that of the former. When he came out of his novitiate he returned to Rome to pursue, in the Convent of St. Bonaventure, the ordinary course of studies in philosophy and theology, and there, as might have been expected, he employed all diligence and attention in faithfully fulfilling his promises. He also exhorted his own companions to be faithful to God even in

all small things, and begged them to be exact in keeping all the good practices of the Religion, saying to them that nothing could be regarded as little which might please or displease God. At other times he added : "If now, while we are young, we neglect small things and fail in these knowingly, when we are more advanced in years and have more liberty we will not scruple to fail in great things." This was the sermon he preached constantly ; hence all the religious community was amazed at the sight of a young man so fervent in the practice of all virtues, and in begging others to acquire and exercise them also, that he seemed to aim at soaring to the most sublime sanctity. At the time of recreation, whilst walking in the orchard, Leonard endeavored to encourage his companions to become Saints, saying to them : "Let us hope in God, and with His grace, which never fails to help, especially those who with humility and confidence ask for it, we may not only be good, but also become Saints." He induced every one of them to choose each week one virtue, and to practice it as often as possible, discussing it during that time and also the means of acquiring it. Again, he persuaded them to promise that when one of them fell into some fault, he would, during the conferences they held among themselves, kneel down before another, beg of him to correct him of the fault, and promise with the divine help to amend it. By means of this holy industry he gained most abundant fruit for himself and his co-disciples. In this way he succeeded in turning the recreation into devout colloquies and a school of perfection, and by these practices avoided passing the time in idle and useless discourses. As they conversed always upon spiritual subjects, and especially the devotion to the great Mother of God, love for her constantly increased in him and the others, as also the love of virtue. Very often, too, and with the greatest pleasure, he expressed in his conversations the desire he felt to go among the infidels, in order to convert souls to Jesus Christ and give his blood and life for His love. This desire was so great in him that, imagining himself to be in the midst of barbarous people, he would think of what he would say to persuade them to embrace the Gospel, and how he would conduct himself if he were seized and cast into prison, what sort of martyrdom they

would give him, and what acts he would perform when about to die for the Lord.

About this time it happened that Monsignor di Tournon, afterwards Cardinal of Holy Church, was preparing to go to China, and was looking for fervent and zealous evangelical workers, capable of succeeding in such an arduous and difficult mission, being desirous of taking them with him. This fact came to the notice of our Saint, then still a student, and it seemed to him a propitious occasion to satisfy his ardent wish, so he offered himself for the great work. He mentioned his desire to his superiors and some most eminent cardinals, and it was resolved that he and Father Pietro da Vicovaro, his co-disciple of the same Retreat of St. Bonaventure, should go to China. This resolution, however, was not carried out, because of some impediments that supervened, to the very great sorrow of the Servant of God, who, later on, in the course of his life, often used to say that he had not been worthy to shed his blood for the love of Jesus Christ. And when he would hear of some persecution that had broken out against the Christians in that vast empire, raising his eyes to heaven, he would exclaim: "I, too, should have gone, but my sins have prevented my doing so;" manifesting by such remarks that he still felt the most ardent wish to spread the Catholic faith and to die for it. Having lost all hope of going to China, Leonard went to Cardinal Colloredo, who had great influence, and begged him to obtain his appointment to the missions of Lucerna, but His Eminence told him it was not God's will that he should go among the heretics, for he was destined to give the missions in Italy. His after-history proved that this answer came from a special inspiration of the Lord, and as such it was taken by St. Leonard himself, who, in consequence, did not petition again to be sent to far-away countries, but pursued diligently the study of theology, which he and his companions in the Retreat of St. Bonaventure were studying under Father Tommaso da Genova, M. O. After this he applied himself to the missions, which he gave in many parts of Italy, the wonderful success of which all know and of which we shall hear later on.

In the meantime the Father Guardian of the Retreat, Father Pio da St. Colomba, was asked to assign some of his religious to

preach, during the coming Lent, to the young girls of the Conservatory of St. John Lateran, then numbering about three hundred, who were placed under the spiritual direction of the religious of the above Retreat. The Superior decided at once to appoint our Saint, who, though he was then only a deacon and a student, had given, in several of his discourses in the refectory, undoubted proofs of his talent and ability to preach. Hearing the command, Leonard bowed his head in obedience and prepared to carry it out. He was always accompanied by an experienced religious of the Convent of St. Bonaventure when visiting the Conservatory, and he began and concluded his Lenten course of sermons with so much zeal and edification that, for a long time afterwards, nothing was talked of but the great profit derived from his sermons. The rector of that institution, who listened to him with delight, saw the contrition caused by the power of his words, which were animated by a spirit truly apostolic, and, full of amazement, cried out: "This young man will be a sonorous trumpet of the Gospel, which will bring many sinners to the path of salvation." Shortly afterwards he was ordained priest in Rome, and from that day he began a mode of life even more perfect than that which he had followed up to this time. He began then, and continued as long as he lived, to go to confession every morning before ascending the altar, and often he would go to confession morning and evening, that he might approach it cleaner and purer. In celebrating the Holy Mass he always observed with great exactness all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church.

To the disciplines, fasting and other mortifications prescribed by the rigid rules of the Retreat, Leonard added many more; and consequently, besides the exact fulfillment of every work which he was bound to do in virtue of his profession, he exercised himself also in several virtuous and meritorious works to which he was not bound, and stood alone, an object of admiration to his brethren, none of whom could discover in his words and actions the least fault, so great was the perfection with which he spoke and acted. In the meantime, according to the custom of the Order, he completed his studies; and both because of his talent and the earnestness with which he applied himself, he made

wonderful progress and profit in them. Nay, he was so enamored with his studies that he inspired others with the same love for them ; and in several discourses with the Religious, about the practice of the virtues and the religious perfection, he said to them that they should never relax in their studies, in order to gain knowledge for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, because it could not be acquired without studying. Sometimes he added that he had always studied and was still studying for the same purpose ; therefore, in the course of his life, having united the study of the virtues with that of the sciences, he was regarded as a learned and holy religious, everyone praising him, both for the sanctity and the knowledge of doctrine which they saw and admired in him.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

St. Leonard is appointed Lecturer of Philosophy. His sickness, and stay in Naples and Port Maurice to recuperate his health.

BEING well informed of the talent and the holiness of St. Leonard's life, his Superiors destined him to teach philosophy in the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, feeling certain that the students under his discipline would profit very much in the sciences no less than in piety. He accepted the office of lecturer, and it was the universal expectation that he would become an excellent professor in the classroom ; but God, who had destined him, not to teach from the chair, but to preach from the pulpit, with His wonderful Providence, ordained that he should be obliged to resign this office in the first year. He was of a delicate constitution, and the rigid penances, joined to an unwearied application to his studies, made him so weak and thin that he looked like a skeleton made of skin and bones. He was soon dispensed from the office of teaching, and, for a time, was placed under treatment in the infirmary, where they endeavored with all proper remedies to bring him back to his former state of

health. But the Religious saw that, in spite of the medicines, the disease had progressed so far that he was subject to severe hemorrhages, and heard from the physicians that he was a consumptive and that his recovery was despaired of. By their advice they concluded to send him to Naples, hoping that he would derive some benefit from that climate. With the permission, then, of the Father Minister-General of the Order, Leonard betook himself to Naples, and there remained several months; but the spitting of blood became every day more copious, and the Father Guardian of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, hearing of it, wrote to him to come back to Rome; which he did, setting out at once on foot for the Eternal City.

On this journey he reached Terra di Vallecorsa, a place having good salubrious air; and, by permission of his Superiors, he stopped there for a few months without, however, experiencing any benefit even there. In order that he might not be idle, though sick and much reduced, he contined to go, on feast-days, to preach in the Oratory of St. Anthony in this town; and as the church and convent for the Reformed Friars Minor of the Retreat were then being built, he exhorted the people to carry stones and other materials for these buildings. That they might be more encouraged to labor, he would first load himself and move forward, all the people vying with each other in following him in procession. But when it became known in Rome that even the air of that locality afforded him no benefit, Leonard was ordered back to the infirmary of the Retreat, in which, however, he did not improve in the least; all remedies, though applied to him with the greatest charity, were found to be useless. Not knowing what else to do in the case, the physicians suggested that he be sent to his native place; so the Father Guardian secured permission from the Minister-General for him to go to Port Maurice. St. Leonard departed from Rome in the year 1704, and when he arrived at his birthplace, was received and cared for in the Convent of the Nunziata of the Minor Observants; though to no purpose.

Having found all human remedies useless, Leonard turned confidently to the most holy Virgin, begging of her to obtain for him his health from her Divine Son, and promising that, if

his prayer were heard, he would devote himself to the missions; that is, to promoting with all possible zeal the glory of God and obtaining the conversion of sinners. His prayer was indeed heard, and in a short time he was so free from the infirmity which had afflicted him for five years, that he was able to undertake and carry on those labors which we shall speak of in the course of this narration. But, as he could not at once give himself up to preaching, according to his desire, lacking yet the permission of the Superiors of the Order, he delivered several discourses in praise of certain Saints. In these the gift of eloquence with which he was endowed became apparent; though, speaking of them on later occasions, he said that he had burnt them; and, while so saying, he struck his breast, accusing himself of having wasted his time in them. He also wrote several sermons on the Passion of Jesus Christ, to which he was most devoted; and, in order to promote its devotion among the people, he introduced in these places, for the first time, the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis* (Way of the Cross); in which, up to his death, he took a special interest and for which he felt a singular affection. He made known the infinite treasure of the indulgences to be gained in practicing this devotion, and exerted himself with the Sovereign Pontiffs Benedict XIII, Clement XII and Benedict XIV in spreading it everywhere. Hence, while he dwelt in the Convent of the Minor Observants, in his native place, he encouraged this devotion. With the contributions of some benefactors, through his influence, fourteen chapels were built in the piazza of this convent, in each of which was erected a Station; and he wrote, with his own hand, the inscription proper to each Station under the painted figures which represented different steps in the Passion of Our Saviour, upon which the people were to meditate. The chapels being built, Leonard instituted this pious and devout exercise, which was afterwards continued every second Sunday of the month, by a procession headed by a priest wearing a cope, and concluding with the Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament and a fervent discourse by St. Leonard, who also caused other Stations to be erected in the kitchen-garden of the same convent.

In the thirtieth year of his age, St. Leonard received from

Monsignor Giorgio Spinola, bishop of Albenga, permission to hear confessions, and was given by him, to whom his zeal for the salvation of souls was well known, ample faculty to labor in every part of his diocese for the welfare of the same ; wherefore, encouraged by the kindness of that very zealous pastor, Leonard began to hear confessions and preach in all the surrounding places with so much fervor that great and wonderful conversions resulted from it. In the year 1708, he gave his first mission in the Terra di Artallo, only two miles distant from Port Maurice, whence he started every morning, returning in the evening after the mission, during which he worked very hard, as he had no companion to help him—preaching, instructing, hearing confessions and doing everything that the laborious office of a missionary entailed. Though it was winter-time, he went and returned barefooted, continuing to do this until the year before he died. Having happily concluded this first mission, for which he had prepared himself with fervent prayers to the Lord, that He might vouchsafe him light and strength to begin and prosecute the apostolic ministry to His greater glory and the profit of souls, Leonard was asked to give another mission in the Church of the Madonna dei Piani, already mentioned, and this also did much good and resulted in many conversions. One evening while he was returning, as usual, to the Convent of the Minor Observants, in his native place, where he dwelt, he noticed a man following him, sighing heavily. Leonard waited for him, and began to talk with him about the eternal salvation, asking him whether he could do anything for his soul, saying that he was ready to assist him. The poor man, kneeling on the road, answered him, weeping : "Father, you have at your feet the greatest sinner that can be found on the face of the earth." The Saint, touched by this answer and by seeing the man weeping bitterly, replied : "And you, son, have found in me a poor man who will be to you a loving father." He encouraged him to become reconciled with God, led him to the convent, and, having heard his lengthy confession, sent him back to his home rejoicing, because he was relieved of a load of sins that, in the past, he could never bring himself to confess.

On the occasion of the feast of St. Bartholomew the Apos-

tle, which was to be celebrated in the Terra di Caramagna, the Servant of God was invited to preach there. He was informed, when he arrived, of the abuse practiced on that day, viz., that men and women danced publicly, turning a religious celebration into a carnival; he, therefore, spoke very strongly in his sermon against such disorder, proving by strong arguments how much the devil profited by balls. But, notwithstanding this, having heard that a large portion of the people were no sooner out of church than they went to see the dances, he took a crucifix in his hand, and, accompanied by two men with lighted torches, went straight to the dancing-place. As soon as they saw him, the musicians and all the people tried to escape; but they were exhorted to stay, and St. Leonard preached with so much fervor and zeal that all present burst out into loud weeping, and that profane spectacle was turned into a beautiful spectacle of tears and repentance. Nay, it happened, while he was preaching, that an arm of the crucifix became detached from the cross, and the people, in consequence of this, were touched and began to cry with a loud voice, asking God's mercy. The Servant of God took occasion from this accident to inveigh with greater force against the abuse of profaning with dances the feasts of the Saints, adding that, perchance, God willed to make known by this sign that He was ready to strike them with a thunderbolt, unless they would promise no longer to commit such profanations. The people, salutarily frightened and moved, then promised never more to profane the holy-days with dances and carousing, and afterwards faithfully kept it. The young missionary, seeing that God blessed his labors, took courage to fulfill the promise he had made, of procuring, by his sermons, the spiritual salvation of his neighbors, and, consequently, was ever ready to go where he was called, unmindful of disasters or fatigue.

Not satisfied with this, but reflecting on the austere life of the Retreat he had embraced in becoming a Religious, he studied always how fully to correspond to his vocation. It happened that they chose as Minister of the Minor Observants of the Province of Genova the same Father Tommaso, who, as was told before, had been lecturer of theology in the Convent of St. Bonaventure when the Saint was studying there. He was a man

famous for piety and learning, and was then the theologian of the Most Serene Republic of Genova. Leonard deemed that by this election God had opened the path to his just designs, which were to institute in Liguria a Retreat for those Religious who wished to lead a more retired and devout life. He communicated this idea to the new provincial, who, gladly approving of it, offered him at once whichever convent he liked best, and which, in his opinion, would be most suitable for the establishment of such a Retreat. Our Saint, full of joy for the favor obtained, and having found other zealous Religious, chose the Convent of St. Bernardino, which, being a mile distant from the city of Albenga, seemed to him more adapted for the solitary life that was to be conducted in it. Hence, in the year 1708, he withdrew to this convent with others who joined him; and the whole community being animated by the same spirit, they began to lead such an exemplary life that the citizens of Albenga were very much edified by their holy example, and greatly benefited by their untiring work in the confessional and in the preaching of the Divine Word. The bishop of the diocese rejoiced in seeing the change of conduct in his flock, through the labors of these evangelical workers, and began to look upon the Convent of Albenga, now become a Retreat, as upon a sanctuary and the gem of his diocese. He called upon our Saint to preach and to conduct spiritual exercises for all kinds of persons, and also to do other works of piety; in all of which the apostolic man manifested more and more his great zeal and the gift which he possessed of bringing back sinners to God.

In the meantime the summer arrived, and, partly on account of the unhealthy locality in which this convent was situated, and partly in consequence of the austere life which the Religious led in it, they all became ill, with the exception of two clerics and the Servant of God. It therefore fell to his lot to labor constantly in the recitation of the office in the choir, in attending the confessional and in the assistance he lent night and day to the sick. The heat of the summer once over, the Religious regained their former strength, and resumed the old rigor of life with so much earnestness, that they went so far as to eat only herbs and chestnuts, during the coming advent. But their recovered health did

not continue long, for they all soon became sick again ; therefore, seeing clearly that the climate was not suitable for a penitential life, it was thought proper to ask the Father Provincial for a convent in a more healthful locality. The Superior willingly granted this new request ; and, as in the General Chapter, not long before celebrated in Rome, it had been decided that in every province there should be a place of Retreat, he designated for it the Convent of Port Maurice, where St. Leonard had dwelt with the Minor Observants for the space of four or five years.

On account of its being his birthplace, and because of the service he had rendered there for the good of souls, it was confidently hoped that the undertaking would happily succeed, meet with the approval of the citizens, and give them pleasure. But the work did not meet with the success they had hoped, for the devil, beginning to feel the losses which the labors of our Hero had caused him to sustain in that locality, and foreseeing even greater ones if he remained there longer, manœuvred so that, first, because of the revolt of the rabble, and afterwards that of the most influential citizens, the founding of the Retreat there was prevented. The uprising of the ill-disposed people went so far that two Religious, sent from Albenga to Port Maurice by St. Leonard to take possession of that convent, were expelled with violence ; neither did our Saint, who went there a few days later, meet with a better reception. But he, adoring the inscrutable judgment of God, without being frightened or discouraged in the least, continued to work in the diocese of Albenga for the spiritual benefit of the people, giving, by order of the bishop, missions in Ortovero and Rezzo. In these places the memory of St. Leonard was preserved so vividly that, at that time, the men began to go barefooted and in the garb of penance to the Church of the Madonna, a mile distant from their dwelling-places, which practice they continued for many years. The good bishop above named wished also that this Servant of God should not depart from his diocese ; nay, he had already arranged that he should preach in other parts of it during the fall ; but Leonard could not comply with his wishes, for, after having spent the summer preaching in various castles and villages, he was obliged by the Superiors of the Order to go elsewhere, as we shall now relate.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

From Port Maurice St. Leonard goes to Florence, where, after being employed in divers pious works, he is asked to give the Missions in several places.

THE Grand Duke Cosimo III being informed of the exemplary life that the Religious of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure were leading in Rome, and of the great amount of good they were doing among the people, asked, and obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XI, that a similar Retreat should also be instituted in Florence, assigning for it the Convent of St. Francesco al Monte of the Minor Observants. The Superior of the Retreat of Rome selected for the new foundation four Fathers deemed most suitable for the undertaking, one of whom was St. Leonard, the fame of whose zeal and prudence had already spread throughout the country. They received the obedience from the Minister-General on the 8th of September, 1709, and the Servant of God accompanied them to Tuscany, where God, by establishing the Retreat, had prepared for him a very large field, which he was to cultivate and from which he would gather abundant fruits of penance, owing to the many souls his sermons were to convert to the Lord. But the Lord's works generally meet with contradictions and obstacles in the beginning, and the foundation of the new Retreat was no exception, because, the greater the welcome accorded to these Religious by the prince, who had invited them to Florence, the stronger was the dislike they met with from many of the nobility and even from the court itself, because of various human considerations. Besides the jests made everywhere at their expense when going around begging alms, the doors were shut in their faces, and they received such insults that they needed much patience and meekness to bear them. As their enemies were angry because the Grand Duke still persisted in loving and protecting the new Religious, they spread a report to the effect that the friars who had just arrived were bent upon destroying the Stations of the *Via Crucis* along the road which leads from Florence to

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the Convent of St. Francis, which were among the first erected in Italy, and were much frequented by the Florentines, especially during Lent. The purpose of this rumor was to try to cool the love which the Grand Duke bore them, that thus they might lose his protection.

Moved by the discussion which this rumor had caused throughout the city, the Grand Duke betook himself in person to the Monte, and conferred with the Religious about what was being whispered. He not only assured himself that the rumor was false, but discovered, instead, that these Religious had determined to perform that pious exercise with the greatest solemnity possible, in procession and with the addition of a sermon, with which they had already charged St. Leonard. Cosimo III, knowing these things, remained fully pleased and satisfied. Nay, he had an interview with the Saint himself, and recommended to him to encourage the people in frequenting the *Via Crucis*, which the Saint promised to do by preaching at every Station. He added that it was necessary for His Highness, on his part, to co-operate with him in rendering the devout exercise more fruitful, by removing many abuses and disorders which were committed, especially on the Fridays of March, when the people practiced the devotion in larger numbers. The pious prince promised to do all that was expedient, and, when it came to his knowledge that on these days, inns and taverns were opened along the road to St. Francesco al Monte, where one could eat and drink in open defiance of temperance and the Lenten fast, he issued a rigorous edict, in which he forbade, under the severest penalties, the opening, on the occasion of the *Via Crucis*, of any inn or tavern, or the selling of wine or eatables along that road. Prostitutes were also forbidden, in the same edict, to leave the city and go to the Monte, lest they might serve, as in the past, for a snare of the devil and scandal to those who were journeying to the devout function. The Servant of God continued to preach in various churches of Florence and in places around the Convent of the Monte, as also in the diocese of Fiesole, with such fame as an apostolic man that the Grand Duke rejoiced in it, because of the improvement in morals which he noticed in every condition of persons. He often visited him, conferring

with him about matters concerning his own conscience and the good management of the State.

Monsignor Panciatici, bishop of Fiesole, had also a high opinion of St. Leonard ; and when the latter was performing the *Via Crucis* there, he would go with his suite to said Convent of St. Francesco al Monte, and, barefooted, with a cross on his shoulders, to the greatest edification of all, he would follow the holy exercise. On the Fridays of March, in order to remain awhile with the Servant of God, he used to sit down on the ground, and partake of bread and water in company with the Religious in the public refectory. One day whilst Father Segneri, Jr., was preaching a mission in the piazza of Santa Croce in Florence, the Monsignor, noticing our Saint among the audience, said to persons nearby that Leonard had no need to listen to the sermons of others, because he could teach anybody the way to be a missionary. The same prelate employed him to preach and conduct spiritual exercises in many monasteries of nuns, several of which he brought back to a perfect community life. He also charged him to give missions in the Monastery of the Convertite, in the Conservatory of Porta a Pinti, and in other pious institutions and churches of the city and vicinity. Cosimo III, therefore, being more and more pleased at having introduced these useful and zealous apostolic workers into his State, assigned to them also, in 1712, besides the Convent of St. Francesco al Monte of Florence, the Convent of St. Francesco del Palco, one mile distant from Prato, and occupied likewise by the Minor Observants. The new Religious took possession of it in the month of August of the same year, changing it, like the other one, into a Retreat ; but here, too, they met with much opposition from the citizens of Prato. The Grand Duke, in order to soften their hearts, deemed it best that St. Leonard should give a mission in Prato ; which he did the following year, as will be told in the proper place.

In the year 1710, then, on the occasion of the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis*, our Saint began to preach in Tuscany, in the Convent of St. Francesco al Monte, with so much fervor that immediately the fame of his preaching spread throughout the whole of Florence, and in a short time the concourse of people

who came to hear him was so great that the church, large though it was, could not accommodate them. Seeing this, and the wonderful success of his apostolic labors, the Grand Duke requested St. Leonard to make, for the welfare of his State, two *Ottavarj*, one in the Church of St. Lawrence, the other in that of St. Felicita, which he himself, with all his court and family, attended.

The good prince perceived the great amount of good and profit for souls that the Servant of God was accomplishing by his zeal, and begged of him to give missions in all of his grand duchy, proffering to him assistance and support for himself and his companions. St. Leonard thanked the Grand Duke for his generous offer, and then, with freedom, added, that he willingly accepted the task of cultivating that vineyard of the Lord; but, as to his support, he had a Master more wealthy than His Highness, who had always provided for him in the past, and, he felt sure, He would do so for him in the future as well. The Grand Duke asked him who this master was; and the Saint answered that it was God, trusting to whose providence, he meant to live in poverty, being sure that God Himself would continue to provide for him whilst he was laboring for His glory. The most religious prince was very much edified by this answer. It was at this time that our Saint, after many and fervent prayers, wrote down the Regulations to be observed in the time of missions, and which, with his companions he kept during the rest of his life.

Afterwards, in the year 1712, he openly took the field against hell, and gave his first missions in Pitigliano, diocese of Siena, in Tuscany, the birthplace of Gregory VII. They resulted in so much good for these people that the one who had orders from the Grand Duke to provide the missionary with everything he needed during this and other missions, wrote afterwards to his brother, dwelling in Florence: "I cannot refrain from letting you know that Pitigliano has enjoyed a great Servant of God, who has finished the holy mission, and will proceed hence to Sorano, to sanctify that place; because his work cannot be called converting, but sanctifying. Father Leonard is a trumpet of the Holy Ghost, who, by his amiable manner, draws to himself the most hard-hearted hearer; and I glory in having been charged

by his Royal Highness to serve him and furnish him with all that he needs. But I had little occasion to attend him, for, what little food they need, they obtain by going from door to door and begging it. I had an apartment with five rooms prepared for them, each with a bed furnished with mattress and every comfort; but, as soon as they arrived, St. Leonard ordered everything removed and some boards brought in, instead, for them to sleep upon. I believe him to be kept alive by the special assistance of God, because it would be impossible in nature for anyone to live whilst enduring such great fatigue and practicing such rigid penances."

With similar success and with the same rigid manner of life, St. Leonard also gave missions in other sections of the county of Pitigliano, visiting nearly all parts, though it was winter-time. When it came to the ear of the Grand Duke that the people of these places were speaking of St. Leonard as of an apostle sent from God to correct the morals of the world, he requested an account of the great work in writing, and, when he had read it, he sent it to the Father Guardian of St. Francesco al Monte, in order that it might be preserved in the archives of that convent for the information of posterity.

In the year 1713, whilst the pestilence was making dreadful ravages among the cattle in the provinces adjoining the grand duchy, and the prevailing drought made people fear that famine would follow, the Grand Duke requested that this untiring worker should conduct a triduum in the Metropolitan Church of Florence. This was so successful, and so many were penitent, that, though the devotion lasted but three days, a much longer time had to be spent in hearing the confessions of the repentant and converted people. When all fear of famine or a possible epidemic was over, Cosimo III acknowledged the benefit obtained from the intercession of Mary, to whom he had caused many prayers to be offered, and begged of the Saint to celebrate, in thanksgiving, another solemn triduum at the Church of the Impruneta, five miles distant from Florence, where there is a miraculous image of the Blessed Virgin, which was, at that time, exposed during the Christmas holy-days, and, on the last of these days, carried with great pomp to the nearby Mount Santa Maria.

The Grand Duke sent invitations throughout his State, exhorting all his subjects to attend the sacred function; and, because of this, the concourse of people was so great that their number was calculated to have reached one hundred thousand and more, the Prince Gian Gastone, the Most Serene Princesses and the Apostolic Nunzio also taking part in it. As soon as the procession reached the mount, our Saint delivered a fervent discourse, which was clearly heard, without the loss of a syllable, even by those who, on account of the multitude, found themselves at the distance of a mile. After the sermon, benediction was given, signaled by the firing of a gun that had been carried up to a high point, in order that the echo resounding more easily from place to place, the whole of Tuscany would know, almost at the same moment, the time of benediction, and, therefore, everybody might kneel down wherever he should be. Many tears were shed on this occasion, the compunction of the people being very great, and the whole function closed by carrying the holy image, in procession, back to the Church of the Impruneta.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

St. Leonard gives Missions in several parts of the Grand Duchy, and is chosen Guardian of the Convent of San Francesco al Monte of Florence.

TO soften the hearts of the citizens of Prato, exasperated, as already said, towards the Religious introduced by the Grand Duke into the Convent of San Francesco del Palco, this prince requested, as already indicated also, that the Servant of God should give a mission there, being confident and certain that by the virtue of his voice and the force of his example, he would win their hearts. In the month of May, then, of the year 1713, our Hero devoted his apostolic labors to the city of Prato, where, arriving after vespers from the new Retreat of Palco, on the 21st of this month, which fell on Sunday, he was

received by all the clergy, headed by the Vicar-General of Monsignor Visdomini Cortigiani, bishop of Pistoja and Prato. He was presented with the Crucifix by the Vicar-General, who also made a short address to the people on the words of the Epistle of the day (James i, 22): "*Charissimi, 'estote factores verbi et non auditores tantum, fallentes vosmetipsos'*"—"Dearest brethren, 'be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.'" St. Leonard, as a zealous missionary, answered him in the words of St. Paul, that he did not intend to preach anything "but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"—"*Nisi Jesum Christum et hunc crucifixum*" (I Cor. ii, 2), and that he would cheerfully give his blood and life in order that, during the missions, all might be converted by sincere penance; after which all went processionally to the cathedral. At the first sermon which the Saint delivered there, so deep and sincere was the emotion of the people that they cried out with a loud voice, asking God's mercy, and the sacred minister could hardly close the services, being disturbed by the clamor and weeping of his hearers, who conceived such great esteem for him that some of them took notes of all he said from day to day, and of every circumstance of his virtuous actions, even to the smallest one. God blessed abundantly this mission, which was accompanied by the spiritual exercises which St. Leonard gave to the people, and the processions of penance which then took place. It was, therefore, the source of so much fruit that, surpassing everybody's expectation, the city of Prato appeared as if changed into a garden of virtues, and, where before there had been many opposed to the Retreat established there, now all became favorable to it, and began to look upon the new Religious as men sent by God to make the way of salvation easier for them.

The fame of the apostolic missionary soon spread throughout the whole of Tuscany, and many bishops in it petitioned him to give missions in their respective dioceses. The invitations were accepted by the Servant of God, who had nothing more at heart than to promote the glory of God and to secure the spiritual welfare of his neighbors. He, therefore, journeyed through the dioceses of Massa, the marshes of Siena, of Arezzo and of Volterra, converting everywhere numerous souls to God, and

leaving all stricken with wonder not only by the zeal and strength of his preaching, but by his austere and exemplary mode of living as well. It seemed that even the most hardened hearts, touched by his words, animated by the example of his holy life, and by divine grace, could not help being moved and converted. Wherefore, Leonard was venerated by everybody not only as a valiant missionary, but also as a holy and perfect Religious, who always in the time of the missions observed a very exact method of life, suited to the practice of the most edifying and beautiful virtues.

In the years 1714–15, he exercised the apostolic ministry in the bishoprics of Pescia, of Chiusi, of Colle, of San Miniato and of Pistoja, always with good results and wonderful profit to his hearers, whom he edified and converted, at the same time, by voice and example, as already stated, and as will appear from a letter written by the bishop of San Miniato to the Father Guardian of San Francesco al Monte, in September, 1714, and from another sent by the pastor of the Church of San Rocco, situated a mile from Pistoja, to the same Father Guardian, in the month of June, 1715. The bishop above mentioned, thanking the Superior for having sent him, for the good of his flock, so zealous a worker, expresses himself as follows: "Father Leonard goes back to his sacred Retreat rich in merits for Paradise, as he labored tirelessly with wonderful zeal for fifteen days, and I may say also for fifteen nights, to procure the salvation of my most beloved people, and, as I delight to hope, with the greatest results. As for myself, I can only say that divine grace triumphs in him; for it seems impossible to me that, without the most special help of God, a man can accomplish so much." And the pastor of San Rocco's of Pistoja, after our Saint had given the missions there, writes thus: "Blessed be the hour that I thought of troubling your Paternity in order to ask you for Father Leonard. How much, my Father, God has wrought by means of this His good Servant, He alone can tell, as He alone can know it. The whole city venerates Father Leonard as a Saint, a learned preacher, and a most fervent missionary; and all souls have been enchained by his fervent words. He moved everybody, even to the most fastidious, who, '*prurientes auribus, a veritate auditum avertunt*' (II Tim. iv, 3, 4)—'having itching ears, turn away their hearing

from the truth.' He, only, was not converted who did not come to hear him. The concourse of people was very great, and it is estimated that at the second procession of penance there were fifteen thousand persons ; at the Papal Benediction, twenty thousand. All the confessors of the city were kept very busy, and one could notice in the people an extraordinary recollection, a very great apprehension as to the things of the soul, and a deep silence concerning everything else. He left here in the midst of universal sorrow, well expressed by the tears of the people, who did not wish to let him depart, and the whole city is still especially anxious to have him return again. The principal knights and dames of the city, at extremely inconvenient hours and in the midst of great heat, flocked to San Rocco's to hear him and also to go to confession to him. Many people slept under the porticos of the church. God be blessed, who visits His Church by sending her His Servants ! How great has been the fruit of the holy missions, is made evident from the devotion whereby the exercise of the *Via Crucis* is practiced. It is a very strange thing that the knights and dames of Pistoja, formerly so averse to the external demonstrations of piety, now perform the *Via Crucis* with so much exterior recollection that they even kiss the ground, and still continue the practice after the mission."

In the year 1715, while St. Leonard was thus working throughout Tuscany, and immediately after the above-described missions, he was chosen Guardian and Director of the Convent of San Francesco al Monte of Florence, his electors being most certain that by his talent and zeal, and even more by his exemplary life, he would greatly benefit that sanctuary in its interior life and its outside influence. But he, abhorrent, as he was, of all dignities, both because he well knew the dangers that are met with in them, and also because they would prevent him from devoting himself to the missions, as he had promised to do till his death, brought himself with great difficulty to accept the office conferred upon him, and did so only because he would not set himself in opposition to Divine Providence, from whose hand he acknowledged it. Having accepted it, he at once applied himself to promote religious perfection in his subjects, and to influence them more and more to give edification to the

faithful by their good example, and to assist them in the confessional and all their temporal needs. Afterwards he caused the Constitutions to be printed, similar to those of the Retreat of Rome, and laid down several points for the better regulation of each day's actions, in order to secure uniformity, and that everyone should know just what to do in each particular hour. These Rules evidenced such devotion, that not only did the Superior-General willingly approve of them and permit them to be printed, but the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XI, having seen them, praised the fervor and piety of St. Leonard, who had composed them, and on the 15th of November, 1716, sent a letter to him, written by Cardinal Paolucci, Secretary of State, expressing his high satisfaction and the edification he had experienced in reading the many devout exercises to which the Religious of that Retreat daily bound themselves, that they might become perfect. As the prudent man, before taking any step, sought the opinion and approval of each one, this method of life was adopted by all and put into practice with so much joy that their progress in the spiritual life was wonderful indeed, under the guidance of Leonard, who was first in the practice of every virtue and in the exact fulfillment even of the least action prescribed by the Rules and Constitutions of the place.

Besides the example through which he instructed and encouraged others, Leonard was often wont to impress upon them the observance of the Rules by fervent discourses, and in addition to the exhortations addressed to individuals, every Sunday evening he used to address the whole community in the refectory on this subject, and also upon the obligation which bound every Religious to increase his perfection and acquire virtues. He spoke with such great energy and fervor, that a person, hearing him, felt himself stimulated not only to be better, but also to be a saint. When this became known to certain Regulars from other places, who were of some distinction, they went to the Convent of the Monte to hear him, remaining outside the door of the refectory lest they might be seen by him. All were amazed at the energy and zeal with which he reasoned, and even more at the internal emotion which they felt as they thus stealthily heard him ; consequently they departed thence much

edified and full of esteem and reverence for the Servant of God. As to the Religious, his subjects, they were even more astonished at seeing that he not only kept with exactness all rules prescribed, but added to these, other austerities and practices not enjoined, for he took only a short rest upon bare boards with a piece of wood for a pillow, ate but one meal a day, consisting of pulse or herbs, went about barefooted even on the bitterest cold days of winter, wore at all seasons but one habit, all torn and patched, and practiced other mortifications and penances, of which we will opportunely speak elsewhere. They were rapt in admiration at seeing him all afire with charity to help his Religious and the lay people as well, not sparing fatigue to establish the former in a perfect observance, and to relieve the latter in all their needs.

In this same year 1716, as a rumor was afloat in Florence that God had revealed to a holy soul that a very great chastisement was impending on that city, Cosimo III ordered that in seven sections of the city, missions should be given by distinguished Fathers, allowing our Saint, who was one of the chosen seven, to select that church of the city which he liked most. St. Leonard, leaving to others, through humility, the principal ones, selected for himself that of St. Nicholas, situated in a corner of Florence, inhabited only by poor and lowly people, and there gave his mission in the month of January. The fruit of this second mission in Florence was also very great to the people. During this time, he returned every night to the Convent del Monte, of which, as already mentioned, he was Guardian.

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

St. Leonard founds the Solitude of Sta. Maria dell' Incontro.

THE burning heart of St. Leonard, not satisfied with the rigorous practices he observed in common and privately in the Retreat, and the more to facilitate for himself and his Religious the acquisition of the most consummate perfection, continued to study how to find the manner and the way to do so. As the example of his Seraphic Father came to his mind, who at times was wont to withdraw to certain lonely and desert places, where he meditated only on God and attended to the most important affair of his salvation, thus acquiring new light and vigor of spirit, Leonard resolved to look for a remote convent in which nothing should be done but strengthening constantly the contemplation of things heavenly and divine. For this object he incessantly prayed to the Lord, and his prayer was soon heard ; for, in the year 1715, a very suitable place was offered to him, viz., a Hermitage situated on the top of a mount six miles distant from Florence, called Sta. Maria dell' Incontro, already hallowed by Blessed Gherardo, one of the first Tertiaries of the Franciscan Order, who had dwelt there.

Our Saint went to see this place, and was fully satisfied with it. While he was arranging with the Superiors of the Order about the establishment there of a Solitude for those Religious who, inspired of God, from time to time wished to withdraw themselves to that place, he, himself, drafted the Constitutions they were to observe. In the year 1716 they were printed in Florence, after having been submitted to the Religious of both convents, viz., del Monte and del Palco, who, by secret vote, cheerfully accepted them on the 28th day of November, 1715, and after they had been approved on the 29th day of June of the following year by Father Giacomo da Verruchio, then Vice-Commissary-General of the Reformed Friars Minor. This Father Giacomo was so much edified by the truly great fervor of St. Leonard, and the good Religious who adhered to him, that he approved these Constitutions in the following words : "*Præmissas*

supplicationes cum benedictione Dei, et Seraphici S. P. Francisci, quantum in me est, ore, manu et corde confirmo"—"The above petitions or Rules, with the blessing of God and our Seraphic Holy Father Francis, as far as in me lies, by word, hand and heart, I confirm." When he had afterwards obtained every other necessary faculty from Rome, the bishop of Fiesole, on the Feast of the Annunciation, gave up the Hermitage to the Religious, who, from the Convent of St. Francesco al Monte, went there in company with our Saint, who was still their Guardian, all walking barefooted, though the road was covered with snow, and singing psalms and praises to the Lord. Having celebrated there the first Mass, they, later on, with alms gathered by a pious and devoted Florentine, built the dwellings for the Solitaries, who began to live there on the 23d day of May, 1717. While the building was being erected, our Saint was all solicitude to see that the edifice should be finished according to the rule of the strictest poverty; hence there were built but eight small cells for the Solitaries, and four for the Religious guests and the Superiors who might go there to visit the place. The eight cells were only five feet wide and nine feet high (1); so that by stretching the arms one could easily touch both side walls, and by raising them, the ceiling also, which was made of bare reeds. All the walls, even of the cells, were left rough, without any plaster whatever, in order that everything should breathe of austerity and poverty. The doors were no wider than two spans, nor higher than six, and the windows but one span wide and one and a half spans high. All other parts of the building corresponded, in proportion, to the smallness and rude finish of the cells. As to the food, St. Leonard appointed that while there they should never eat meat, milk-food, eggs, fish or salted meat, and that they should keep the nine Lents which St. Francis was in the habit of keeping. Therefore, with the exception of fifteen or sixteen days in the year, when they were permitted to partake of milk-food and eggs, they kept a rigorous fast, eating in the morning only herbs and pulse with some fruit, and in the evening

(1) In Italian it really says *palmi*, *span* or *palm;* which is less than a *foot.*

only the collation allowed during the fasts prescribed by the Church, so that their eating might be styled a continuous penance. He also ordained that they should sleep on the bare boards and that everyone should exercise himself in other mortifications ; all of which was done by these Solitaries with so much cheerfulness and diligence that, with holy emulation, they mutually encouraged one another not only to practice those, but even others in addition.

St. Leonard, as the founder of this Solitude, in order to encourage his subjects, was the first one to retire to it and to fulfill with all rigor every one of the above regulations. He wished to do twice as much, because his love of suffering and the fervor of his spirit so prompted him. Afterwards he continued to frequent it, not only going there twice a year and remaining for months to perform the spiritual exercises, but also on the approach of each solemnity, the better to prepare himself for it, and again upon returning from the missions in which Clement XI had enjoined him to occupy himself, even during the time he was Guardian. This was the rest he took from his apostolic labors, viz., to retire and live in that wilderness and there lead a most austere life, even more penitent and mortified than that which he led in the missions and during the remainder of the year. He, too, kept that constant and most strict silence which was prescribed, except when interrupted during the night or day by the vocal and mental prayers made, without fail, in common. He practiced that retirement imposed by the Rules, which was such, that no one, the Superior excepted, could even administer the most holy Sacraments, nor write or receive letters but from Superiors ; and he practiced the discipline, just as all had to do, every night after matins, besides attending, after vespers, for one hour daily, together with the other Fathers, to manual labor. Nay, he would fain never depart from that Solitude ; he was in the habit of calling it the place of his delights, and, when going to it, he would be heard saying that he was going there to make his novitiate for Paradise, and that his greatest consolation would have been to live and die in that Hermitage, from which obedience alone and the desire to bring souls to God by preaching would ever bring him out. There, in 1717, during the time of

the spiritual exercises, he conceived and wrote down, in order to have them ever present, those sixty-five Resolutions, renewed afterwards several times, and which he often examined in order to see whether he kept them strictly. These Resolutions being like a very bright mirror, clearly reflected the path of virtue which he followed, and showed to what a sublime degree of sanctity and perfection he attained. They should be given in this chapter ; but, as this would interrupt too much the thread of his actions, they will be related in another book taken from the original writing by his own hand, which has been published by others.(1) These Resolutions alone would suffice to give us a well-nigh perfect idea of our Hero and of his life, particularly his innermost thoughts ; but, in order to give a more complete account of him and of all the labors which he publicly underwent in behalf of his neighbors, which do not distinctly appear from these Resolutions, we will follow the design and order determined upon.

St. Leonard thus secured the end he aimed at in the foundation of Sta. Maria dell'Incontro, not only for his own spiritual advancement, always returning from it holier and more fervent with each successive visit, but also for the Religious subject to him, who constantly petitioned to enter it, and who left it all afire with holy zeal for the acquisition and the practice of the virtues, for the regular observance, and for the salvation of souls. In fact, many of them, after having dwelt for some time in that school of perfection, went about, throughout Tuscany and other provinces, full of fervor, conducting the missions in imitation of St. Leonard, either singly or with him, and recalling many from the state of sin to penance. Others, having tasted the interior peace which they enjoyed in this Solitude, could not tear themselves away from it, and remained there, some, eight continuous years, some ten, others even sixteen, practicing with all exactness this rigid method of life, and would have remained there till death had they not been obliged by their Superiors to depart therefrom in order to be employed in various charges and offices of the Religion.

(1) These wonderful Resolutions will be found at the end of this Life.—*The Translator.*

The sweet odor of this Sanctuary and the life being led in it having become known, several Regulars of various institutions asked to be received into it, to make the spiritual exercises there; and, after they had lived according to its rules for several days, they returned to their respective monasteries edified and contrite. Many knights, likewise, being desirous of improving their conduct, asked for the same privilege, esteeming it a singular grace to be allowed to spend some weeks with those Solitaries, not only following by day and by night all their devout and austere practices, but also putting on, during the days they remained with them, their coarse habit; and they departed with tears from this Hermitage, protesting that they were leaving Paradise behind. Other distinguished personages, both ecclesiastical and lay, visited that holy place, and admired its austerity and poverty, and the fervor with which the virtues were being practiced. Greatly edified, they praised God, who never fails to send to His Church faithful servants, who work with all their souls to serve and glorify Him. Even the Grand Duke Cosimo III, having heard that there was much talk in Florence about this Solitude, went in person with his Court to see it, and inspected minutely every part of it, as did also, later on, the Most Serene Princess Elettrice, his daughter, together with Monsignor Conti della Gherardesca, Archbishop of Florence. They all remained greatly amazed and full of holy fear at the wilderness of the place, and of high esteem for the sanctity of life of its inhabitants. Finally, the Sovereign Pontiff Clement XI, from simply reading of the things to be observed there, as set down in its Constitutions, wept with emotion, and was heard to say that in them shone the just ideal of the true Friar Minor. Among the many remarkable actions of our Saint during his first term as Guardian of the Convent of San Francesco al Monte, was the following: The evening before he was to leave it for the Solitude, he would kneel down in the midst of the refectory, with a stone hanging from his neck, accusing himself as a man of negligent and lukewarm life, in great need of Divine assistance to enkindle and reform him. He would then beg pardon of the Religious Community, and ask it to implore, by its prayers, this grace from God. But, if he derived so much good and spiritual profit for his Religious and for others

from this holy institution, much more he certainly derived from it for himself, as appears from the virtues he practiced and the fervor he conceived in this place, and from the very Resolutions he formed there, and which, as promised above, will be published, for those desirous of reading them, in a separate little book.

CHAPTER NINTH.

St. Leonard delivers a woman from sentence of death, gives the Missions in the Diocese of Pisa, is again elected Guardian, and gives other Missions in Florence.

OUR Saint was accustomed, after closing the missions, to withdraw himself, as already stated, either to the Convent of San Francesco al Monte of Florence, or to the Solitude of the Incontro, in order to attend more particularly to his own spiritual affairs, and to fill himself with new fervor in the quiet of the cloister, as well as to firmly establish the practices introduced by him. It happened, on one of these occasions, that, while he was in the convent, a young woman was cast into prison, and, after being tried, was found guilty of infanticide and condemned to death. The sentence being published, it caused much talk in the city of Florence, as it was maintained that the crime had not been sufficiently proved, and therefore that the unhappy woman should not be made to suffer death. But, although many so felt and spoke, no one was found who had the courage to undertake her defense, for she had already been condemned, and there were but two days left before the sentence was to be executed. One of the most prominent lawyers, touched with compassion for the poor creature, and knowing in what high esteem the Grand Duke held St. Leonard, and how much influence the latter had with the ruler, went straight to the convent, and, having acquainted that Servant of God with the facts, begged of him to obtain from His Highness the favor of a suspension of the execution of the sentence and a revision of the

process. He offered himself, at the same time, to defend the woman. When the charitable Father heard this, he at once went to the court, where he was benignly received by the Grand Duke, who answered that the process was closed and the sentence already pronounced, and that, as it was to be carried out within two days, it could not be annulled. The intercessor humbly replied that it was not asked to arrest the course of justice, but simply to review the processes, for some mistake might have occurred in them, as was rumored throughout the city. When he heard this, the no less just than pious Cosimo III, raising his eyes to heaven, after a brief silence: "Yes," he said; "it is not impossible that some error may have occurred. I grant that the execution of the sentence be suspended, and that in the meantime the process may be revised." This was done with the assistance of the above-mentioned lawyer, and, it having been clearly proved that the already-condemned woman was guiltless, she was delivered from death, to the joy of all Florence, who, at the same time, exalted the generous charity of our Hero. He continued to render assistance everywhere, by words and deeds, to his neighbors in need, and became every day more celebrated and sought after throughout the whole of Tuscany.

St. Leonard afterwards went to the Diocese of Pisa to give the missions, but, before opening them in the city itself, he gave them in several suburban places in this diocese, making in every one of them many conversions and gathering copious fruits of penance. When preaching on scandal in Vico Pisano, he so moved his audience that, while he bitterly scourged himself with the discipline and the people wept, the pastor of the place ascended the platform, lay down the surplice, took the discipline from the missionary, and, confessing with a loud voice that he was the scandal-giver, began to beat himself with cruel strokes on the bare shoulders. The people felt even more strongly moved at seeing their pastor, a good and upright priest, give such a public spectacle of self-humiliation. Monsignor Frosini, Archbishop of Pisa, heard of the wonders wrought by the zealous missionary in his diocese, and determined to go in person to hear him, and beg of him, at the same time, to come and preach in the city. In furtherance of this object he betook

himself to Pontedera, six miles distant from Pisa, where the Man of God was then working in behalf of the people, and happening to listen to the sermon on the Universal Judgment, and hearing the loud cries of the congregation weeping with contrition and begging for God's mercy, so that the sermon was several times interrupted, he remarked, that he had never seen so many tears shed or such bitter lamentation. When services were over, he begged our Hero to go and give the missions in Pisa, too, where he was hopeful of an abundant harvest; and St. Leonard, never tired of working, after having labored in various other places, went thither. He gave the first missions in that city in the Church of St. Augustine, at which Cosimo III and his court were in constant attendance; but, because this church did not suffice to hold the great crowd of people that flocked to them, it was determined to give the next missions in the cathedral, which, though very spacious, still could not hold all; therefore, the majority were generally compelled to remain outside. When the latter heard the cries and weeping of those who were inside, they, too, would weep and cry out for mercy. These missions being over, St. Leonard gave the spiritual exercises to the students of the University of Pisa, in whose hearts he so vividly impressed the eternal truths and the solicitude for one's salvation, that they, from that time on, not only attended to the study of the sciences, but to the practice of the Christian virtues.

Shortly after this the Grand Duke sent him to Leghorn, where there were, as everybody knows, a great number of Jews, who enjoyed much liberty, because, being very rich, they carried on the most profitable business and were permitted to employ Christian servants, whose wives even acted as wet nurses for their children, from which many and serious disorders proceeded, as everyone can easily imagine. Added to this, many Turkish and heretical vessels constantly landed at that port, and licentiousness had so increased there by the intercourse with this sort of people, that it seemed a very forest of vices. Very willingly did the valiant Minister of God accept the undertaking, knowing that he was to work in a vineyard so much in need of cultivation; hence, burning with zeal, he set out for that city just at the time when Carnival was imminent. No sooner had he arrived there

than he announced the missions, and began and continued them with such a lively and fiery zeal that the whole of that population were moved to contrition, shedding abundant tears at every sermon, and giving public and undeniable signs of repentance, so that Leghorn seemed another Ninive converted. Not a word was uttered there about Carnival, though many preparations had already been made, at a great outlay ; masquerading, by common accord, was forbidden ; the theatres were shut, as there was not anyone to visit them ; and, through the labors of this Evangelical Worker, that horrid forest was changed into a charming garden. The throng of people who, being converted and repentant, rushed to the feet of the sacred ministers to confess their sins, was so great that they not only kept all the confessors of the city busy, but it became necessary to place soldiers as guards at the house of the missionaries, to prevent any trouble that the multitude of penitents by day and by night might cause.

Among the many conversions which followed, that of some prostitutes was very remarkable. They, hearing of the great things related throughout Leghorn about the valiant missionary, moved by curiosity, determined to go and hear him. They numbered more than forty ; and, though the thought of being converted had never entered their heads, still, when they heard the words of the Saint, who inveighed against those who, hating their own souls, barter them for a base pleasure and do not mind losing them eternally for so little, they conceived such great sorrow for their iniquities, and so much fear because of the dreadful state of their souls, that all with one voice began to cry and weep publicly, asking mercy and pardon of God and of the city, for the scandal they had given till then. Wonder and joy filled everybody at the sudden conversion of these women, who, by the pious Father, were placed in a separate house, from which they came out, on the days of the sermons, and went in procession to hear them. They were dressed as penitents, not only veiled, but covered from head to foot by a large mantle. The people, seeing them going to church thus, were edified and touched, so that they praised the Lord, who, by means of his zealous Servant, had turned the scandal of the city into a cause of edification. Their wonder even increased when it

became known that three of these women, four days after conversion, had passed into eternity with tokens of true contrition; therefore all magnified the Divine Mercy, who had drawn them out of their baseness and profligacy, and exalted the merit of him, whom God had made use of to convert and save them. But the prudent man would not conclude the mission without first assuring those poor and yet fortunate women some support. Knowing that necessity might become their pretext for returning to their former wretched life, he efficaciously exhorted all from the platform to give alms in order to place them in some situation; and the amount of money collected was so great that it sufficed to give each one of them a sufficient and decent support.

Enriched with new and glorious merits, because of the abundant harvest gathered in Leghorn and the neighboring towns which were likewise blessed by his preachings and example, St. Leonard returned to the Convent of San Francesco al Monte, thence to betake himself, as he did, to the beloved Solitude of the Incontro. Shortly afterwards he was for the second time chosen Guardian and Director of this Convent al Monte. The great interest he displayed in that office for the faithful observance of the Rules and Constitutions of the Retreat was well known to the Religious subject to him, who admired him as a model and teacher of all the virtues, and as their chief support, after God. Though he was the first in attendance at all the exercises of the community, and ever watchful of the deportment of his subjects, he never failed to be interested, at the same time, in behalf of outsiders, and looked after their welfare. He assisted at the confessional and directed many persons in the path of salvation, some of whom, after an edifying life, reached the end with the renown of singular virtue. He also often went to various monasteries of nuns, either to hear their confessions, or to instruct them, by salutary conferences, in the religious perfection, encouraging them, especially by giving them the spiritual exercises, to advance always in the same.

The Grand Duke Cosimo III had been sick for some time, but was anxious even then that Christian piety should flourish in his States, so, when St. Leonard went to pay him a visit, he charged him to give two missions in Florence, one in the Church

of St. Frediano, and the other in that of St. Caterina delle Ruote; which bore, as usual, very great fruit, the people giving public signs of amendment and repentance. Shortly after, the Grand Duke passed away and was succeeded by Gian Gastone, his son, who, following in his father's footsteps, continued to avail himself of the help of our Saint, inviting him, too, to preach the penance throughout the grand duchy, even while St. Leonard was still Guardian of the Convent of San Francesco al Monte.

The following incident, which happened at the convent, will clearly show how great was the zeal of this Servant of God for the observance of the institution, even of its least rule, and what means he took to correct his faulty and deficient subjects. Following the solemn canonization of the Saints Giacomo della Marca and Francesco Solano, celebrated in 1726, the convents of the Order celebrated the Octave of these Saints, and that of San Francesco al Monte of Florence also desired to keep it. St. Leonard, its Guardian, having to leave it for a mission, gave orders to all his subjects, in common, to celebrate it with all possible solemnity; but expressly forbade them three things, viz., to drape the church with silk hangings, to have artificial fireworks, and to chime the bells; this order being according to the Rule of the institution of the Retreat. Having issued this command, he left; but, on his return, he found that it had not been obeyed, and tried by various means to find out the transgressors, but in vain. Then, not wishing this disobedience to go unpunished, while all the friars were, one evening, in the refectory: "My brethren," he said to them, "our laws have been transgressed. A disobedience has occurred, and the guilty one has not been discovered. Well, as I expected, it will fall to my lot to do the penance for it." Having said this, he gave the order that no one should leave his place to stop him, and then walked to the middle of the refectory and knelt there, harshly scourging himself with an iron discipline while three *Miserere* were being recited in a loud voice. The Religious wept at the thought that their Superior was so cruelly scourging himself for the fault of others, and begged him to desist; but he kept on beating himself till the end of the three *Miserere;* and then arising and returning to his place, essayed to prove, by a

strong discourse, how exact the obedience of the Religious must be, and in what high esteem they should hold all the good practices of the Religion (1), adding that every fault, even the slightest, should be punished. God indeed confirmed this truth, by punishing one of the guilty ones for the above-mentioned disobedience in the very act of committing it; for, having ascended the belfry to ring the bells, whilst swinging the very bell that should not have been rung, he was struck by it, with such force, in the forehead, that, though not killed on the spot, nevertheless, as long as he lived, he carried the scar visible to all, as the sign of his disobedience. From this and other facts, that might be related, it may be seen, as has been already hinted at, that our Hero was extremely zealous, as Guardian, for the observance of all the rules prescribed for the convent of the Retreat, and consequently was a rigid observant of them himself.

CHAPTER TENTH.

St. Leonard gives Missions in Lucca, then in Rome, whence he returns to Florence, and exercises the same holy Ministry in other places.

THE Lucchesi, many of whom had several times heard St. Leonard preach in their vicinity, were desirous that he should return to their city and dominion to give the mission once more, and to this end despatched to him the Canon Lucchesini, who, on their behalf, went to Florence to press their request. St. Leonard, who, among other resolutions, had also taken one never to refuse to labor for the salvation of souls, whenever he might be requested to do so, accepted the invitation, and at once set out for Lucca. He afterwards always spoke favorably of this city, praising the docility of its citizens, and blessing the abundant fruit which he, at different times, gathered

(1) Here, as in many other places, *Religion* means *Religious Order.*

there. As soon as he reached Lucca, he began the missions in the Church of St. Frediano. Though this church was very spacious, it was deemed wiser to close its doors as soon as it was filled, to prevent an accident in the great crowd, which rushed to it from the city and nearby places to hear him. While the mission was still in progress, a poor wretch, who, on account of his crimes was to be executed, asked St. Leonard to attend him at his death ; and St. Leonard, being tender and compassionate, though he felt a great repugnance to witness a violent death, moved by that charity which conquers everything, took courage and fearlessly accompanied the man to the gallows, assisting him till his last breath. Many people had flocked to witness that terrible spectacle, and St. Leonard, ascending the scaffold, delivered such an eloquent address that all those present began to cry, sorrowing and weeping, asking God's mercy and forgiveness.

From Lucca St. Leonard passed to other places in that archbishopric, and, while traveling, he saw, perched upon the top of a hill, a village which, he said to his companions, inspired him to visit it, but, as he did not know what place it was, nor to what diocese it belonged, he sent his fellow-travelers ahead to see whether he could exercise his apostolic ministry there. They conferred with the pastor, and found him well disposed to receive the missionary, as were also all the people, provided permission could be secured from the Ordinary. A messenger was at once sent to him, and, having easily obtained his consent, the mission was begun at once. It became evident from the following fact that it was an inspiration of God which led those Fathers to that place. Kneeling at the feet of St. Leonard, a woman said to him : "Father, God sent the mission here for me." Afterwards she told him that in her girlhood she had committed a grievous sin that she had never confessed through shame, which had increased with her age, and also because there were few confessors in her small, native place, and these were either friends or relations. She added that for the space of thirty years she had been committing sacrileges in approaching the Sacraments, although torn by great remorse of conscience ; and that in her prayers, joined to various penances, she had recommended herself to the most holy Virgin, that She might afford her an

opportunity to make a good confession. She declared that shortly before this She had appeared to her, promising to send her, within four days, a Religious to whom she should confess, and who would absolve her from her sins and free her from that wretched state. The good Father was much affected at hearing this from the poor woman, who, bathed in tears, gave thanks to God for the excellent opportunity afforded her. He encouraged her to make a general confession, which he himself heard with the greatest patience and charity, and left her calm and happy. Taught by similar experiences, he was wont to say that "sometimes, God sends the missions to a certain place for a single soul; that the missionaries, should they not derive from their labors any other fruit than that of winning only one soul, or of preventing a single sin, should feel certain that they had spent their labors well, and that God had abundantly rewarded their work."

It was now nearly twenty-two years since our Hero had undertaken the apostolic ministry. He had visited with his missions the whole of Tuscany, including the Abbey of the island of Giglio, and going so far as to include several places in the Republic of Genova, when, in the following manner, it pleased the Lord to bring him to preach the penance in Rome. Cardinal Francesco Barberini, dean of the Sacred College and bishop of Ostia, well acquainted by report with the zeal and virtue of St. Leonard, wrote him a letter, received by the Servant of God, whilst in the island of Gorgona, diocese of Pisa, where he was busy working for the welfare of its inhabitants. In this letter, besides sending him the necessary faculties, His Eminence begged him to betake himself to Rome, as soon as possible, that he might there give him the needed instructions, as he wished him to give the missions in the city of Velletri. From Gorgona, therefore, he crossed over to Florence, and took leave of the Grand Duke Gian Gastone and the Princess Violante of Baviera, who gave him some letters for His Holiness Clement XII. On the 7th of September, 1730, St. Leonard set out for Rome. While on his journey, which, according to his custom, was made on foot, he visited the shrines of Assisi, of Monteluco and of Valle di Rieti; and on the 28th of the same month reached the Convent of Sta. Maria delle Grazie in Ponticelli, where, thirty-three

years previously, he had received the Religious habit, and had made his novitiate and profession. Having rested there a few days, he resumed his journey towards Rome, and, when he arrived, he went immediately to kiss the hand of the Superiors of the Order, by whom he was very benignly received. On the 4th of October he betook himself to the feet of the Pope, delivering to him the above-mentioned letters of Princess Violante, in which she recommended the Retreat already established by the Saint. The Holy Father was highly pleased to hear from the very lips of the missionary himself of the great amount of good accomplished by him throughout Tuscany, and promised him every assistance for the maintenance of the work he had started. Having given him the Apostolic Benediction, he sent him much consoled to his Convent of St. Bonaventure.

Cardinal Barberini was, at that time, out of Rome, so the brave worker undertook in the meantime to give missions to the poor people sheltered in great numbers in the Hospice of Sta. Galla. He at first met with some opposition, brought about by the enemy to prevent the good which he well foresaw would result throughout Rome, but, finally, having overcome every obstacle, St. Leonard began his apostolic labors on the 28th of October, 1730. Our Saint was then fifty-four years old, and he commenced and carried on these, his first missions in Rome, with such fervor and zeal that their fame soon spread throughout the city, and many people ran to hear him, among them even nobles and ecclesiastics. The church being insufficient to hold them all, he was compelled to preach in the courtyard of the hospice, and, though this was very spacious, still many had to stand on the terraces, at the windows and in the adjacent corridors. All were astonished by the active and holy liberty with which he reprehended vice. He showed its deformity, and, by his invectives, accompanied by hard strokes of an iron discipline, with which he scourged his bare shoulders, even to the shedding of much blood, he excited all to abhor and detest it. The people were also edified by seeing him walking about barefooted and poorly clad; thus, through the efficacy of his words and the strength of his exemplary and penitential life, his hearers were so moved that at every sermon nothing could be heard but weeping

and cries of repentance, and in Rome only our missionary and his missions were discussed. The Holy Father, being informed of this success, ordered him to give other missions in the Churches of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, of San Carlo al Corso, San Pietro in Vincoli and Sta. Maria in Trastevere ; and Leonard obeyed with joy, preaching successively in every one of these churches, with wonderful results, as was made manifest by the conversions that followed, and the extraordinary rush of penitents to all the confessionals of Rome.

One day, during the mission given in San Carlo, a young girl of twenty-two, who, from her dress and deportment, seemed to be a lady of high rank, entered, and, approaching one of the companions of the Servant of God, begged him to let her speak to St. Leonard, telling him plainly that she was a prostitute. Mass, which the Saint was then celebrating, was soon over, and as soon as he received the message, he at once went to the confessional, and heard her confession. After this she changed her whole manner of life, and, dismissing entirely every vanity, and dressing in simple and modest clothes, she continued to attend the mission during the twelve days yet remaining before its close. Though tempted with flatteries and threats by her old correspondents, she remained firm and constant in the holy resolution she had made ; and afterwards, with the dowry of five hundred dollars procured for her by the pious missionary, she entered a monastery, where she ended her life. During this mission, while preaching on the subject of impurity, another young woman happened to enter, who was leading the same kind of a life, with this aggravating circumstance, that her own mother acted as her go-between in her infamous trade. She conceived such sorrow for her crimes that, weeping bitterly, she resolved, cost what it might, never more to fall into them again ; and, though also tempted by many, she, too, kept her resolution. A wicked man, seeing, therefore, that he could no longer make her subservient to his perverse aims, lay in wait for her near her home, until she, for some reason, came to the window, when he shot her. She had time to make her confession and died, in the opinion of all Rome, a glorious death, because she was killed for having refused to offend the Lord.

St. Leonard sometimes, during his missions, preached a sermon on "Purgatory," taking up a collection to be employed in suffrage for those holy souls who suffer there. In San Carlo there was such a great concourse of people of all ranks and conditions, that he made up his mind to preach this sermon there also. The audience was so moved by it and felt such compassion for the poor suffering souls, that the collection taken up in the church alone amounted to over seven hundred dollars, and some even took off the rings from their fingers and the swords from their sides. He would not touch this money, nor any other alms, but left it to the judgment of upright persons for distribution among various churches of Rome, in order to have Masses offered up for the repose of the faithful departed. The Pope hearing such wonderful things of this missionary and the great good he was doing every day, sent the Rev. Barberini, then preacher of the Apostolic Palaces, and, later on, Archbishop of Ferrara, to hear him, enjoining on him to make a conscientious report to him. Father Barberini went to hear the mission, and then related to the Pope, among other things, that he had heard a zealous missionary, whose fervor and power in speaking he could not better describe than by assuring His Holiness that he had made him, though a preacher and one who had grown old at this work, cry, too!

From San Carlo al Corso, Leonard passed over to San Pietro in Vincoli. Here, among the extraordinary conversions, were also those of many lost women, of whom in San Carlo alone twenty were numbered. The Cardinal Vicar therefore ordered him to ask for alms, from the platform, in order to place them in suitable positions. The Servant of God complied, and having recommended the object, at one sermon four hundred dollars were collected, which, together with other contributions received later, were used to put those penitents in a safe place. Other strange and remarkable things might be said of these missions and of the persons, even Regulars, who attended them; but I will only mention Father Galluzzi, a Jesuit, well known for his piety, who, not satisfied with going himself in person to hear the missionary, enjoined upon his numerous penitents not to omit being present at a single sermon, saying that our Saint was

the Apostle of those days. In the meantime Cardinal Barberini, who, as has been mentioned, had been the means of calling the Saint from Florence to give the missions in Velletri, had returned to Rome, so St. Leonard, at his request, set out for that city, and there preached the penance for several days with wonderful profit to the citizens. He exhorted them, if they wished to avert chastisement from themselves, to put a stop to their blasphemies, and to place upon their houses the symbol (I H S) of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, which had already been recommended by San Bernardino da Siena (who had desired this to be done everywhere). The people thus seeing this in many places would reverence IT, and blasphemers would therefore conceive a horror of their enormous crime, which at that time held impiously full sway. In order to escape the excitement of the people who were bent upon accompanying him, St. Leonard left that city one morning before daylight. His departure saw the city improved in morals and altogether reformed. He returned to Rome, and undertook again the apostolic ministry in the Church of Sta. Maria in Trastevere. Though this is very large, still, on account of the throng, it became necessary to preach in the piazza, which was also insufficient to hold the multitude, and therefore all the streets leading to it were crowded, as were also the roofs of the neighboring houses. Nothing could be heard but sounds of repentance, the power of St. Leonard's voice producing always the same effects.

The Grand Duke and the Princess Violante were unwilling that St. Leonard should remain so long out of the grand duchy, and sent a felucca to Rome, begging him to return. After he had received the Pope's blessing and the permission of his Superiors, he set out for Tuscany. When he arrived at Florence, he was received with joy by all the people and the sovereigns as well, and after he had acquainted the princess, who was anxious to know, with all that had happened in the missions of Rome, St. Leonard withdrew himself for many days to the Solitude of the Incontro. When his spirit had obtained new vigor there, he immediately went to Camajore, a city of the Republic and Diocese of Lucca. In announcing the missions there, he said, with extraordinary ardor, that there was an obstinate sinner, who

would not repent of his crimes and change his life, and therefore, if his voice should prove too weak and his efforts insufficient to convert him, he would ask of God to send a thunderbolt to pierce his hard heart. No sooner had he uttered these words than thunder was heard clattering through the clear sky, while streaks of lightning flashed through the church, to the greatest consternation of all those present, and, though none was hurt bodily, many were touched and wounded in spirit. The people were greatly moved by seeing that God gave evident signs of co-operating with His holy Servant for their conversion, and these missions produced most abundant results. Such would have been the case also in other places which the Saint wished to visit, if, as we shall presently narrate, he had not been obliged to betake himself elsewhere, after having given the spiritual exercises to the nuns of various monasteries in Lucca.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

St. Leonard gives the missions in the neighborhood of Rome, then in Rome itself, from which he goes to Florence and afterwards to Viterbo, visiting also other places in the Pontifical States.

WHILE the Servant of God was thus engaged in Tuscany, certain Cardinal Bishops, who, from the time he had first preached in Rome, had determined to engage him to give missions in their respective dioceses, obliged him, through the Superiors of the Order, to return to the Eternal City. St. Leonard received this command in the month of November, 1731, and departed from Lucca. After a very rough journey, because of the inclemency of the season, he arrived in Rome on the 29th, and from there, a few days later, went to exercise the apostolic ministry in the dioceses of Albano, Palestrina, Velletri, Sezze, Piperno, Segni, Ferentino, Alatri and in some parts of the Sabina district, gathering in everywhere rich fruits of penance. After some of these missions he obtained permission to retire for one month to the devout Convent of St.

Angelo di Montorio Romano, in the Sabina, a place very dear to the Servant of God, where, consequently, he very much liked to dwell, because it was perched on a rock in the midst of rugged mountains, three miles away from any village, and because it was once the abode of Blessed Amadeo, who was there favored by God with many graces. Coming forth out of this hiding-place, like another Baptist from his wilderness, St. Leonard continued to devote himself to the welfare of souls, and to give missions in the dioceses above named with such energy and zeal, that the people, at his mere appearance on the platform, were at once moved and wept; while God also accompanied with signs and wonders the voice and labors of His holy Servant.

During the missions given in Sezze, where the diabolical vice of blaspheming was much rooted, St. Leonard inveighed strongly against it, and a terrible occurrence happened there, to be a warning to others. An unbridled youth and great blasphemer jeered at the threats that God, through the voice of His minister, was hurling into his ears, when, lo! one day, just at the time St. Leonard was preaching, while he was riding on horseback through the city, he suddenly fell to the ground, his tongue protruding frightfully from his mouth, black as an extinguished firebrand, and, without being able to draw it in, he died wretchedly. This was taken by everybody as a manifest punishment of God, and caused the people to conceive a holy fear of the Divine justice, which knows how, in time, to punish all who, instead of opening their ears to threats of the scourges impending on sinners, despise and deride them, and give themselves no thought of abandoning sin and amending their lives.

Others also were punished for having set at naught the warnings given by our Saint; for, while he was conducting the missions in a town of the Velletri diocese during the carnival time of 1732, he vehemently exhorted the people to shun balls and masquerades, and yet some persons, who had come to hear the sermon from a neighboring place, returned home, and, receiving an invitation to a dancing-party, without thought of the request of the missionary, went there. But soon the gayety was turned into mourning, for, in the midst of the dance, the floor parted and precipitated them to the ground. All were seriously hurt, the

promoters of the ball worse than the others, being almost reduced to the point of death. The baron of the place wished to punish them severely, but then deeming it proper to give them a punishment which might redound to the benefit of their souls, ordered that all should go in procession to the missions then given in Segni by the same missionary ; and they obeyed punctually, going there in the most exemplary manner and with the greatest compunction.

One evening, while our Saint was exercising the ministry in Nettuno, he was returning very tired to his dwelling-house, when a man threw himself at his feet, weeping, and, embracing his legs, begged him to hear his confession at once, there in the public street. Some of the prominent persons who accompanied the Servant of God endeavored to quiet the penitent, telling him that it was neither the place nor the time to disturb the good missionary, who was fatigued and perspiring, and might, in consequence, catch some serious infirmity, and that he should wait till the following day to make his confession. The charitable Father, however, bade the poor man arise, took him home with him, and there, having kindly heard his confession, let it be understood, to the edification of all who knew of this occurrence, that one should never let an opportunity go by to receive sinners and reconcile them with God, though they be sometimes indiscreet and the time inopportune.

After the missions given in Sezze and in Piperno, St. Leonard went to a certain locality in the Sabina diocese, where, on account of the fair that was to be held there on the first day of May, which was near at hand, he found the people very much averse to accepting the mission. The holy man endeavored to persuade them, by showing that, instead of diminishing, the mission would rather enhance their profits, by reason of the greater concourse of people, who would come also to hear the preaching, and he also added that, having received the order from His Eminence the Bishop, he could not exempt himself from preaching. At this last argument the opposition quieted down, and he was able to begin his apostolic labors, but with few people on the first days, the majority running to the games and spectacles that were taking place before the palace of the

prince, to the great grief of the missionaries who were lodged there. The attendance was very large on the last days, but, in closing the missions, the zealous minister of the Lord reprimanded these people, scolding them for having neglected the opportunity which God had sent them for their spiritual benefit and eternal salvation. He concluded by threatening a dire punishment, soon to befall them, which in reality happened; for, a few days later, a terrible hailstorm devastated all their territory, though it did not in the least injure the fields of the neighboring towns. But if these people showed themselves so little interested in the mission of our Hero, not so the Romans, who were desirous of hearing him again; therefore, when they learned that he was ordered by the Sovereign Pontiff to return to Rome and give the missions, they felt greatly delighted. The Basilica of Sta. Maria ad Martyres, commonly called the Rotonda, was assigned to him, and the attendance was large and earnest, that vast church being filled with persons of distinction, who went there from all parts of the city. Besides the fruit he gathered in abundance, as usual, from his sermons, he furthered the congregation, there established, of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist. He was enrolled in it also; and, therefore, as a member, he introduced it into all the places where he was preaching, so that, before his death, he succeeded in establishing it in one hundred and thirty places. These missions being over, St. Leonard withdrew, as has been noted, to the Convent of St. Angelo di Montorio Romano; and, afterwards, Lent having already set in, during which, in order not to interfere with the Lenten preachers, he abstained from giving the missions, he came back to Rome and gave the spiritual exercises in the palace of Prince Rospigliosi, as he did six different times in several years. These exercises, being public, were no less profitable than the missions; for in the sermons and meditations which he gave out morning and evening in a practical manner, he knew so well and so efficaciously how to present to his hearers the consideration of the *Eternal Maxims*, that a truly Christian and devout life could soon be seen shining in the nobility and in all who attended.

But though this evangelical laborer was working so hard in

divers places and times to win souls to God, nevertheless he did not cease thinking of his Florentine Retreat; hence, in order to prevent any irregularity which might take place there at the election of its Superiors about to be held, he resolved to go there in person; and, therefore, having received the Pope's blessing and permission from the head of the Order, he set out for Tuscany. When at Campagnano, twenty miles from Rome, he began to suffer greatly; for, having eaten there some raw herbs, he was overtaken by severe pains, which gave rise to the suspicion of his having been poisoned. Notwithstanding this, he insisted upon continuing his journey, but was compelled to tarry for one day in Viterbo and take various medicines, without, however, deriving any relief from them. Thus distressed he kept on his journey, till he reached a place called Salci, where, losing his way, and night supervening, after having wandered a long while through fields and woods, he finally found himself in a marsh, without knowing how to extricate himself, nor where to go. Being greatly fatigued from walking barefooted, his pains, which still tormented him, increased so much that his companion feared to lose him, and was already bewailing him as dead. Having escaped at last from this marsh, they found shelter in a barn nearby, where they built a fire with some sticks, and resolved, as they did not know where they were nor whither they were going, to remain there for the rest of the night. The owners of the barn saw the fire, and, thinking it had been kindled by thieves, gathered people from the surrounding country, and, after arming themselves, rushed there to put them to flight. They were astonished and confused, however, when they found our Saint in so sad a plight, kneeling and warming himself at the fire; wherefore, with all reverence, they begged his pardon and took him to their house, not far off, where they gave him sufficient restoratives. The following morning he went to the Convent of Cetona of the Reformed Friars Minor, where he was compelled to stay eight days because of increased illness; but finally, after using several remedies, he was entirely relieved, and continued his journey till he reached Florence. After he had settled the affairs of that Retreat, he started back to give missions in Viterbo.

The people along the route, who, in great numbers went forth to meet him on the road, begged him to preach at least one sermon in their respective places. St. Leonard, full of charity, willingly complied, particularly in Montefiascone, where, at the solicitation of the Princess of Piombino, who was there waiting for him, he stopped to preach a *Triduum*, asking for a cessation of the rains, which were already flooding the whole country. From Piombino he passed over to Viterbo, where he was received with such demonstrations that, in one single procession of penance, ten thousand wax torches were burnt around a "Christ" which they carried on a bier, to the great amazement of the above-mentioned princess, who remarked that, when relating this thing in Rome, she would not be believed, though she had seen it with her own eyes. I must not pass in silence over two occurrences which took place during this mission. There were at this time some Jews in Viterbo, one of whom went to hear the missionary, who, on that evening preached a sermon on Eternity, which so moved the Jew that, Divine grace working in his heart, he resolved to become a Christian as soon as he would return to Rome. With this resolution in his mind he left the church, and, having loaded some merchandise to sell at Montefiascone, he set out for that town ; but when he reached the gate of Viterbo to begin his journey, he felt himself pushed back by an occult force. Surprised and astonished at so untoward an accident, he essayed to continue his journey, but in vain. This happened to him the second and third time. He remained immovable and unable to go forward a single step. He was each time checked and pushed back by the same force, losing also, at last, his eyesight. He went back therefore, and, causing himself to be led to the missionary, related to him all that had happened to him, and earnestly begged for baptism ; consequently, he was instructed, during the remaining days of the mission, in our holy faith, and, to the joy of all Viterbo, was baptized in the cathedral of that city.

The other instance which happened there on the same occasion was as follows : The zealous missionary had inveighed much in his sermons against those who dare to work on feast-days, threatening the transgressors of the third Divine precept with

dire punishment. The day of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist was the last day of the mission, and on that day the Saint was to impart the customary blessing. A young woman, not minding the threats he had hurled at the violators of the holy-days, and against her own mother's will, went, with two other girl companions led by her, to uproot the flax in a field. But while at work there, she suddenly felt her bowels burning as with by an invisible fire, and, crying repeatedly, "I burn I burn!" she was carried by the other two women to the shade of a tree. They left her here while they returned to the fields to get some things they had left there. But, lo! on returning quickly to her side they found her already dead, and black as a firebrand. This occurrence was regarded by all who heard of it as a punishment of God, and caused everybody to esteem His minister more highly, and to carry out more faithfully whatever he had enjoined upon them during the mission.

St. Leonard then went to the diocese of Orte, where the Venerable Monsignor Tenderini was the bishop. Here the virtue of St. Leonard was put to a hard trial by this holy prelate, in the following manner. At the end of the first sermon preached by the Apostolic Man, at the opening of the mission in Orte, he was conducted with his companions to the episcopal palace, assigned to him for his lodging. On entering it, he found prepared a chair, a tank full of hot water, adorned with green leaves, and everything necessary to wash the feet. The Saint was amazed at this, and, most humble as he was, felt abashed when he was told by the good bishop to seat himself on the chair, so that he himself might perform the washing. After a holy contention between two pious men, the prelate, seeing that he could not induce him to do as he willed, ordered him, in virtue of obedience, to sit down and permit him to wash his feet. At the word "obedience" St. Leonard, foregoing all opposition, sat down, full of confusion; and the humble Monsignor, kneeling down, went through the pious function, first washing the Saint's feet, and then, successively, those of his companions. This act both enhanced the just idea the people had of their worthy pastor, and disposed them, through its edification, to receive the seed

of the Divine word in such a manner that it would produce, as in reality it did, a most abundant fruit in all.

Whilst exercising the apostolic ministry in Vicovaro, diocese of Tivoli, our Hero was presented by the Countess Flavia Bolognetti, baroness of the place, with a moulding of great value. It was to be used for a picture of the Madonna, which he carried with him and exposed at his missions. The Servant of God steadily refused it, for he regarded it as contrary to the vow of poverty he had taken and always strictly kept. He, therefore, sent it back to the pious and kind dame, thanking her for her generous charity. After this he visited many cities and towns of the Marca particularly, and of Tuscany, walking always, as was his wont in every season, barefooted, as he himself prescribes in the rules of his missions. Often his feet were so sore and cut that everybody wondered how he could so long endure a life so fatiguing and austere. In the month of February of the year 1735, with very great inconvenience, he went from the diocese of Iesi to Rome, and there, having first kissed the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff, returned to his beloved little Convent of Montorio Romano, in which he passed all Lent, engaged in spiritual works and exercises. At this time a Religious of St. Bonaventure's Retreat wrote to him, in order to find out whether, after Easter, he would come again to Rome. St. Leonard answered him thus: "I have many reasons for not coming to Rome, but two that are important. One is the deception of the world, that regards me as a Religious of some virtue, whilst I am a most miserable one—which false belief causes me intense pain. The other is the loss of time and the dissipation of spirit into which I must necessarily fall when coming to Rome. I, by the grace of God, wish for nothing from the world; consequently, why should I throw away my time in it? As I am crucified to the world, turning my back upon it, so would I that the world should be crucified to me, turning its back upon me and forgetting me. My vocation, as far as I can discern, is for solitude. By the mission, being always engaged for the love of God; and in solitude, being always absorbed in God. All the rest is vanity." These were the sentiments St. Leonard cherished in his heart,

and always endeavored to strengthen by meditation, to which he applied himself with more earnestness in solitude.

After Easter he was to give the missions in the Frascati diocese, upon the recommendation of the Lord Cardinal Corradini, its bishop, so on Good Friday the Saint set out from Montorio towards that place. The devil tried to hinder these missions; but the will of Him who wanted them overcame every obstacle, and they were held in all the towns of that bishopric. At one of them the Lord Cardinal Corradini in person, together with the Most Eminent Guadagni and other illustrious persons, went to hear the sermons, and the missions, which some at first refused to allow, ended with great satisfaction and benefit. In Rocca di Papa, a place situated on a steep slope, materials to complete the building of a new church were lacking. On the very day he announced the missions, our Saint spoke with much warmth of the glory that was to redound to God by the completion of that church, and, then, the sermon ended, set out immediately with his companions for a little mount somewhat distant, where the stone quarry was located. All the people, ecclesiastical and lay, seeing him going in that direction, followed him in procession. Each one took up stones, in imitation of the missionary, who, although very much fatigued, on account of having that day preached several times in different places, was the first to load his shoulders with them. After this the people continued to carry materials each day during the mission, and at the end of that time had gathered sufficient to build the edifice and also to have a large quantity left.

From this place the Apostolic Man went to Frascati, and, when Cardinal Corradini told him he might rest himself from his many labors, he answered him: "I do not wish my rest and do not want it here below; but I wish it and want it only in heaven." The Lord Cardinal ordered him to rest at least one day; and he, compelled by obedience, remained there, thus writing about it to a Religious: "I am made to stop for one day in Frascati, and this causes me more pain than all the disciplines of one year. God's will be done. I will undergo this brief Purgatory;" thus signifying that he loved to work and suffer continuously for the glory of God and the salvation of souls

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

St. Leonard goes twice to Florence, and thence returns to give Missions in various cities and dioceses of the Pontifical States.

IN 1735, some differences arose among the Religious of the Retreat of Florence, concerning certain points of the institution. St. Leonard, lover of good order and peace, went there to settle matters and quiet everything. On this occasion it was made evident how great was his virtue; for, although he here met with some opposition and even affronts, he suffered and overcame everything with patience and admirable courage. He first withdrew himself for several days to the Solitude of the Incontro, to ask there light and assistance from God, and then he adjusted all the affairs of that Retreat, after which he departed therefrom in the month of October, in order to go and preach the penance in Orvieto. Being told that the vice of gambling was deeply rooted in that diocese, he spoke with very great force against it, and threatened the players with a severe chastisement from God unless they would give up their wicked habit, the source of a thousand disorders and sins. Though that part of the diocese, in which he was then preaching, was addicted to the vice more than any other, yet the gamblers abstained from playing as long as the mission lasted, being frightened by the words of the zealous preacher. Nevertheless, the day after the preaching was over, an inn-keeper, little minding the threats of the minister of God, began card-playing again. His wife reminded him of the threats hurled by the Saint against the gamblers, and entreated him to desist. He, however, refused to listen to her, and answered: "Let the missionary talk away, not for his scarecrows will I abstain from playing." These words were hardly uttered when the wretch dropped to the floor, overtaken by a sudden stroke. He soon lost his speech, and shortly afterwards his life also.

From the diocese of Orvieto our Saint crossed over to Civitavecchia, and it is not easy to recount how much he labored there, especially in preaching to the galley-slaves and others who were

then in that port on various vessels. In January, 1736, he boarded the galleon called the "Capitana," around which other ships were anchored, and announced the mission, which lasted twenty-four consecutive days. So great was the fruit which the zealous missionary produced by his sermons in the galley-slaves, soldiers, sailors, convicts condemned to hard labor, and many others, that, where formerly only blasphemies and obscene language were heard, now only compunction, weeping and sighs could be seen. So great was its success, that, to hear the confessions of the penitents it was necessary to employ not only whole days, but also a better part of the nights. The galley-slaves were granted freedom to go to confession to the house of the chaplains of the galleys, where the missionaries were lodging. At the last sermon, when the Papal Blessing was to be given, nearly all the people then in Civitavecchia, including three most eminent cardinals, and some princes and princesses, went on board the ships. St. Leonard returned to Rome, and, during the following Lent, he busied himself in giving retreats to the Religious of various monasteries, and in doing other pious works for the welfare of many souls. When Easter came, by order of the Pope, he went to give the missions in Perugia.

The devil, angered very much on account of the losses of souls chained to him by sin, which he foresaw from St. Leonard's visit to that city, raised there several obstacles to prevent his preaching. On the first day, when the Man of God ascended the platform, Satan caused a very great murmur to arise among those citizens, many of them censuring the proposition propounded by the missionary: "Either Penance or Hell." The antagonists spread the thought that, as it sufficed for him who had sinned grievously to confess his sins and receive absolution in order to secure forgiveness and escape the eternal punishment, penance therefore was not necessary. Thus did they foolishly talk, not reflecting that the penance of which the zealous and learned missionary spoke was that sincere conversion to God, whereby, detesting from the heart all past faults, one begins a life altogether new, in conformity with the teachings and maxims of the Gospel, without which it is certainly impossible to escape damnation. Their ignorant wickedness was unmasked

and refuted, so they then turned their efforts to prevent the performance of the pious acts which the Saint recommended in his sermons. He had persuaded the people to engrave over their doors the monogram of the Most Holy Name of Jesus (I H S), invented by St. Bernardino of Siena, and already nearly all had done so. One night, these sacred symbols, placed at the entrance doors of the houses in a long street, were impiously disfigured and ruined by an unknown rascal, to the horror of everyone who, on the following morning, noticed the fact. All these diabolical contrivances, however, instead of diminishing, rather increased the zeal of the indefatigable laborer of the Lord, who, towards the middle of the mission, saw those same people so changed and repentant that the church was insufficient to hold the great number of hearers, and it became necessary to preach in the public piazza, where many conversions followed. Two of these I deem proper to here briefly relate.

One of the principal knights of Perugia had, for many years, been living in public and open concubinage with a woman, to the scandal of the whole city. The latter one day went to hear the sermon, and was so smitten by the words of the missionary that, waiting for him to come down from the platform, she knelt at his feet, weeping bitterly, and begged him to hear her confession. She protested that she wanted to give up her evil life, and, beginning a new one, make amends for past scandals by a sincere penance. The Saint heard her confession, and the repentant woman proved so strong in the resolution she had taken that, being very young and prepossessing, in order the better to safeguard herself against relapsing into sin, she went to Rome and there donned the religious habit in the monastery of the Convertite of St. Giacomo. The knight seeing that she had escaped from his hands, at first made much noise, but, later on, touched also by the grace of God through a sermon he heard, entered into himself, and, going to the feet of St. Leonard, confessed, among his other sins, that he had been one of those most opposed to the mission. For this and all his other sins he asked God's pardon, with many tears, and promised a true and steady change of life, which caused rejoicing in the whole city. The people gave thanks to the Lord for having

turned, in that mission, two *stones of scandal* into patterns of penance. At the end of the missions the Perugians gave many tokens of gratitude to the Apostolic Man. He venerated the Sacred Ring of the Blessed Virgin Mary, solemnly exhibited to him in that cathedral, where it is kept, and accepted from one of the noblemen the crystal for the picture of his Madonna; after which he left for Foligno.

The citizens of this city, who, with signs of great compunction, had always been eager to hear him during the missions he gave there, and who already looked upon him as a man wholly of God, wished to possess something already used by him for a keepsake in his memory. But they knew that he was so poor that he had not even little sacred pictures to give away, and, moreover, that he would not permit the people to take anything belonging to him, for he often said that the world was mistaken in regarding him as a man of great virtue. They desired to obtain the standard he carried with him in his missions, and on which were depicted the Most Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. In order to succeed in their design, they made another like it, and, with this new ensign unfurled, they went in procession to Spello, where the Saint had gone from Foligno to give the missions. As soon as they reached the church, whilst he was actually preaching, in the sight of all and of the missionary himself, who, being surprised, did not know what to say, they placed the new standard on the platform and took away the old one. The procession of the Madonna, which was made during these missions of Spello, was such, for attendance and compunction, that nearly the whole city of Foligno, besides the people of other surrounding towns, joined in it, many carrying instruments of penance and exhibiting very great devotion and contrition. From Spello our Saint passed over to exercise the apostolic ministry in the dioceses of Città della Pieve, of Albano (again), and of Tivoli.

Towards the end of September, 1736, he returned to his Convent of St. Bonaventure, from the missions given with great fruit in Poli, a place in the last-named diocese. The Religious convened to elect their new Guardian, to whose office was also annexed that of director of all the Retreats; and by common consent they chose our Saint. He did not desire dignities, and,

wishing to be more free in the work of the holy missions, did his best to avoid that charge; but was compelled to accept it, not only by his brethren, but also by the will of the Sovereign Pontiff. He did not neglect, during this tenure, to exercise himself in the apostolic ministry, and gathered abundant harvest of souls converted to the Lord during the missions he conducted in the city of Velletri, and in Zagarolo, diocese of Palestrina. During this year he labored more than ever, with all possible zeal, to promote the faithful observance of all the laws of his institution, encouraging everyone with fervent exhortations and the holiness of his life to walk in the hard road of perfection. He held the office of Guardian till October, 1737, when the Provincial Chapter took place, and he was succeeded by Father Girolamo da Pompejana, who had been his confessor and companion in missions for many years. Now, free from every burden of office, he resumed with his usual fervor the apostolic career. In the meantime, at the instance of His Eminence Cardinal Aldovrandi, Bishop of Montefiascone, he betook himself to this city, to conduct a holy mission there. The Cardinal wished to support the missionaries at his own expense, providing them with all necessaries; but the Servant of God, loving the vow of poverty, knew so well how to argue, that he succeeded in persuading the Cardinal to let his companions and himself live upon alms, as was his custom wherever he went. The same Lord Cardinal attended, both mornings and evenings, all the sacred functions; and, because on the morning of the first day the canons of the cathedral were not present at the instruction, he, as their bishop, reproached them severely. During the sermon of the Madonna, when the Saint used publicly to kiss the feet of all the priests, the same Cardinal Bishop was so moved that, the following morning, he went to the sacristy, and waited there till the missionary, then celebrating Mass, would return from the altar. As soon as he saw him coming, he knelt down to kiss his feet. The humble Servant of God perceived it, and, blushing and full of confusion, knelt to prevent him; but, after a holy contention, the Cardinal commanded him to obey, so the humility of St. Leonard was obliged to give way, and he allowed the Cardinal to kiss his feet. This was a source of the greatest

edification to everybody present, and to those who afterwards heard this fact related.

Various towns of this diocese longed to hear him; but, as the Florentines made pressing solicitations to have him return to them, he, in order to please them, started for Florence in the month of December. On his journey he suffered greatly because of the rain, snow and frost. He was in the habit of traveling without any provisions, always starting out in the morning fasting, and trusting in the Divine Providence for food. For two days during this trip he experienced such penury that he was compelled to fast until evening. When he and his fellow-travelers approached a house, almost fainting from fatigue and fasting, they were repulsed, on the plea that, at that season, they had nothing to give them; and the Apostolic Man with joy would invite his companions to join him in thanking the Lord, who gave them the fruits of poverty. At last he arrived, in a very wretched condition, at Florence, and there in the Church of St. Nicholas, during the said month of December, he gave the missions. In order that the country-people and others living outside the city might attend them, the Prince of Creon, who was the commander, ordered that, every morning before daylight, the two gates of the city near this church should be thrown open. This caused great surprise among the citizens, who could not recollect ever having seen the gates of Florence open at that hour, and they wondered particularly that such a thing should be permitted at that time, when great caution was being exercised because of the change of government which was then taking place. After he had gathered an abundant harvest in St. Nicholas, our Saint, for the greater convenience of the nobility and the rest of the people, went over to begin the missions in the Church of St. Lawrence. This, though very spacious, could not hold the multitude, which filled even the piazza; wherefore it became necessary to place a large number of soldiers around it, and at the very church doors. During this mission and while the Saint was preaching on the "Obstinate Sinner," it happened that, in the middle of the sermon, all the people broke out into very loud weeping, crying with a high voice and begging God's mercy. The sacred minister seeing that, because of the cries and wailings, his voice could

no longer be heard, took the Crucifix in his hand, and, walking up and down the platform, caused greater commotion and more tears in the audience. At the same time, as though God Himself concurred in a special manner to give efficacy to the voice of His servant, many shadows and globes of fire were seen throughout the church. The most hardened sinners were frightened and touched, so that the priests had to enter the confessionals at once and remain there to hear the confessions of many, who feared to leave the church with their sins upon their souls.

After this mission, which was most fruitful, the Servant of God retired to the Solitude of the Incontro, to make the spiritual exercises and recruit new fervor. He then went to carry out the apostolic ministry in Pesaro, Fano, Fossombrone, Camerino and other cities. In the last-named city, where there were many enmities and dissensions, our Saint succeeded in reconciling the people, and left them peaceful and harmonious. From Camerino he went to give the missions in the Cathedral of Assisi, which he did with great pleasure and satisfaction, because this city was the birthplace of the Seraphic St. Francis, and because its people, including the most prominent nobles, being most anxious to hear him, would stand at the church doors, even at night, though it was in the month of November, till they were opened and they could enter and secure seats. From Assisi the Apostolic Man went to Rieti. Here the fame of his coming had preceded him, and a dame, much given to vanity, withdrew with another person to her cottage in the country, so that she would not need to attend the mission. On the first evening of the mission the cottage caught fire and there was a big conflagration. The dame was frightened and compelled to flee back to the city with her friend. She heard that the missionary had induced the citizens of that city to forego, for that year, the Carnival, which was imminent, and, without paying the least attention even to the exhortations of the other women, who reminded her of the fire that had ruined her casino, she spitefully left Rieti for Rome, to enjoy in the latter city the amusements of the carnival season. But God wishes that we should lend our ears to the preachings of His ministers. He had already frightened her by the fire in her country-house, but now He struck her in Rome as with a

thunderbolt. One evening, gayly dressed, she was whirling around in the ballroom, in a house of *conversazione*, when she was suddenly attacked by the fiercest pains, from which she died, under the very eyes of her mother, who was not inferior in vanity to her daughter ; rather, she had been her teacher.

Among the many conversions that God wrought in Rieti, through His minister, wonderful was that of Ginevra Leoni. She had been dissuaded by her mother from embracing the Religious state, and at the age of sixteen was given in marriage to a Curialist, very different from her both in age and temperament ; she being vivacious, cheerful and fond of amusements, while he was serious, austere and melancholy. Because of their incompatibility many quarrels arose between them, which even resulted in blows. She allowed parties to meet in her house to play games, and this, though reprimanded for it by her husband, who disliked it. Without paying attention to anybody, she continued this mode of life for five years, viz., till the year 1738, when St. Leonard went to Rieti, there to preach the penance. The evening before the opening of the mission, whilst Ginevra was at home with her customary friends, the discourse turned upon the mission. One of the company told her that the missionary with his scarecrows would cause the brains of more than one woman to turn, and warned her to beware lest she should be one of them. He added, moreover, that he wondered very much at the person who had sent him, for, he said, the missions were for the villages, where God was little known, and not for the cities, where everybody knew what he should do to save himself. Notwithstanding such a tirade, the dame determined to go and hear the Man of God ; but, as it rained when she was leaving the house early in the morning, she changed her mind. She was reproved by a lady friend, who told her that, fearing neither winds nor rain, she could go in the evenings to the theatre, therefore she should not get frightened now because of a little rain, and so stay away from the mission, upon which, perchance, her eternal salvation depended. She was finally persuaded to go, and continued to attend all the following days. Being in the church one evening at the sermon on "Death," in which the missionary wierdly depicted the state of a dying

person, it seemed to her, as she herself afterwards wrote, that she was lying abed with the Crucifix in her hand, the candle near her mouth, the priest alongside of the bed and the devil at its foot, and with all her iniquities drawn up before her eyes. She felt moved interiorly and experienced a complete change of heart. Hence, she resolved to alter her life, and, on returning home, she burnt all her instruments of vanity. Her husband dying shortly afterwards, she took, though young, the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, and, leading a very austere and exemplary life, in 1749, she passed away to the Lord with the universal reputation of a woman of great virtue.

From Rieti the Apostolic Man went to preach the penance in the cities of Corneto and Toscanella ; and thence, in January, he traveled with the greatest inconvenience to the city of Ascoli in the Marca. While delivering the last sermon in Corneto he fainted on the pulpit. This, because of his many sufferings, had happened to him also at other times and places, and now, after sitting down a little while on a chair, he resumed and finished his sermon with so much fervor and strength that it caused amazement in the whole audience, who had thought him nearly dead. Great wonderment he caused also in Ascoli, for he initiated the missions the very evening he arrived there, with wonderful vigor, though tired and nearly prostrated through weakness and the fatigue of the long, hard journey. The fruit of this mission was so copious that, in order to prevent any disorder that might arise from the great rush of the people who, repentant, crowded around the Servant of God and his companions, to confess their sins, it became necessary to place two guards at the confessionals. The church was unable to hold all the people ; the Saint was therefore obliged to preach in the piazza, where two incidents happened that cannot be passed by in silence. First : Whilst the Servant of God was preaching the sermon on the "Most Holy Name of Jesus," a dove was seen by everybody to fly above and below the canopy of the platform several times, and then to disappear altogether after the sermon ; whereby it was surmised that the Holy Ghost wished to make it known, under that form, that He was assisting His minister and giving his voice power and strength. The other incident which happened in the

same piazza was that, during another sermon, three marble columns became detached from the church front, under which was a great multitude of people to hear the mission. If these columns had fallen down they would have been bound to crush the people and cause great carnage ; but they stood, although inclined as if suspended in the air, to the amazement of all, and did no harm whatever. St. Leonard afterwards visited other bishoprics of the Marca, and, among them, those of Macerata, Osimo and Ancona. In this last-named city he kept the image of the most holy Virgin Mary, which he was wont to carry along in his missions, exposed for five days. Of the one hundred and thirty candles, which had been kept lit for a long period each day before it, only about six pounds were consumed at the end of that time, or as much as had been contributed by one benefactor, and no more.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

From the Marca he returns to give the Missions in the vicinity of Rome, and also in several parts of the Kingdom of Naples.

WHILST the unwearied Laborer in the Lord's service was working to the great advantage of souls in some of the dioceses of the Marca Anconitana, as has been already said, he was ordered by his Superiors to return again to the neighborhood of Rome ; and he, seeing in their order God's will, at once went thither, where obedience called him. He visited, at this time, the dioceses of Tivoli, Veroli and Fondi, everywhere preaching the penance with the same zeal and wonderful vigor. He gathered in most abundant harvests, by removing enmities and dissensions, extirpating vices, reforming customs, and bringing many sinners from the way of perdition to that of salvation. From Fondi he was asked to pass over to St. Germano, a city subject to the Very Rev. Abbot of Monte Cassino. The Apostolic Man very cheerfully betook himself to that place, convinced, as he was, of the spiritual need of the population,

and anxious to help it by his words and by his labors. He reached there in the month of January, 1740, and would have commenced the missions as soon as he arrived, had not the above-named abbot, noticing his complete exhaustion, and the frailty of his body, which was worn to a shadow from the effects of the journey and the austerity of his life, ordered him to rest, at least for two days. The Holy Man obeyed, and the time appointed for this rest being over, he began his ministry with his wonted fervor and grace. So great was his success, that words fail to recount all the good he accomplished in the souls of the people. Some of these had shown themselves to be opposed to the mission in the beginning, but after the event recorded below their eyes were opened and they became favorable to it.

Among the holy means which St. Leonard was in the habit of employing to shake sinners from the lethargy of their vices, and bring them to repentance, was that of having the largest bell in the respective places rung during the mission, one hour after dark. At the same time he begged the people to recite three Our Fathers and Hail Marys, together with other prayers of the faithful. He hoped that the obstinate sinners, knowing that the bell was being rung for them, might soften and be converted to God; which really happened in many places. He had now requested this to be done likewise in St. Germano, but some who, because of their prominence, should have promoted the mission, showed themselves, instead, contrary to it, and went from place to place speaking ill of the same, saying that he wished to frighten them by the sound of the bells. But God, who, on many other occasions had shown Himself to be the defender of His Minister and faithful Servant, willed to show Himself such on this occasion as well. The sexton of the cathedral being unable, without help, to ring the bell, which was very large, called several men to assist him at the appointed time. When he entered the belfry he noticed that the rope had coiled itself up to such a height that it could not even be touched, and yet, at the same time, he heard the loud pealing of the bells. They all believed that somebody had gone up into the tower and pulled up the rope, though they knew that the church had been securely locked till then, and could not

understand how anybody else could have entered it and ascended the steeple. Finally, after various surmises, as the bell kept ringing with great force, and as it was already half an hour since it had started, he began to shout from the bottom of the campanile that it was enough, and that if it continued in that manner the bell would be broken. The bell, however, still kept ringing with greater fury and clanging; so, after lighting a candle, he ascended the belfry with his companions, and, to his very great amazement, saw that the bell was ringing away without human hands, moved by a power unseen. He looked at it for some time, surprised and frightened. At last he essayed with great strength to stop it; but the rope from the end of the regulator had recoiled so close to the block, that even though they had wished to pull with the greatest force, they could not move, much less ring, that enormously heavy bell. All this was legally attested before a notary, and was the reason, as hinted above, that even those who unwillingly had accepted the mission, did repent and thank the Lord, who, for the benefit of their souls, had sent to that city so zealous a missionary.

Leaving St. Germano, he proceeded to Nocera and Gubbio. In the last-named city, the bishop being unable to take part in the solemn procession of the *Corpus Domini*, which was celebrated during the time of the mission, St. Leonard was asked to take the bishop's place in the sacred function. At first he, most humble as he was, refused so great an honor; but, at last, yielding to the gentle urging of clergy and people, he was forced to carry the Blessed Sacrament throughout the city, assisted by the same ministers who would have officiated with the prelate, and with the same pomp, as if the latter had taken his part in the procession. The modesty with which the Servant of God deported himself, all mortified, even outwardly, caused the greatest contrition in that population, who conceived such a high esteem for him that many of the prominent cavaliers, robed as pilgrims and on foot, resolved to follow him in the missions he afterwards gave in the dioceses of Camerino, St. Severino, Fermo and Loreto. In the city of St. Severino the bishop presented him with the Crucifix at the starting of the mission, and, taking the thought from his name of Leonardo, told him he was

a lion against hell; hence, he begged him to roar loudly in behalf of his flock. He roared indeed so loudly that he banished all vices from these people, and, having introduced among them a perfect reformation of morals, caused the saying of the zealous prelate to be verified. It happened, during this mission, that a poor woman wished very much to go and hear the catechism, which the missionaries were explaining, so she left her little child of two years in bed, and, recommending it to the most holy Virgin, went to the church. When she returned home, she did not find the infant, and began to seek him, crying. At last she found that, having fallen through a hole from the height of two stories, it had remained suspended in the air by its swaddling clothes, without being hurt in the least, to the amazement of all who saw it or heard of it.

After St. Leonard had gone through the above-mentioned dioceses with untold fruit to his hearers, he went from Loreto to Rome. As soon as he arrived, having kissed the feet of His Holiness Benedict XIV, who had been elected Pope two months previously, he begged him in all humility to tell him whether it was God's will that he should continue to work as a missionary, or whether he would not have done better to remain retired in his convent meditating upon his own soul, for it was time he should prepare for death. The wise Pontiff told him that it was the will of God that he should devote the whole of his life to the missions, and that as a valiant soldier he should die, sword in hand, fighting against hell. How well this prediction was verified will clearly appear just at the time of his death. His Holiness then intimated to him that, wishing to proclaim the Jubilee, which is usually granted in the first year of every Pontificate, he destined him to give the missions in five churches of Rome, viz., in the Holy Apostles', in St. Charles' al Corso, in St. Mary's in Trastevere, in St. Peter's in Vincoli and in St. John's of the Florentines. As soon as he received this order he withdrew to his Convent of St. Bonaventure, there to make the spiritual exercises, in order to enkindle himself more with that celestial fire, with which he was already burning, so that he might spread it afterwards with more energy in the hearts of his hearers. On the 13th of November, 1740, he announced

the missions in the Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles, and when these were concluded he gave them likewise successively in the other churches assigned to him, with a large attendance of people of all conditions and the winning everywhere of many souls to God. In the Church of St. Charles he converted to the Lord ten prostitutes, whom he, at once, sheltered in the conservatory of the above-named Father Bussi, their support being assured by the alms collected for them.

His apostolic labors in these five churches of Rome being ended, in the month of January, 1741, our Saint set out towards Terracina. The letter, which we presently submit, written January 24th of said year, by Monsignor Oldi, bishop of that city, to the Father Guardian of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure in Rome, will amply show how great was the fruit he gathered in that population, and how great the esteem he won from the people by his virtues. In his letter, then, this prelate says: "*Ad majorem Dei gloriam* (To the greater glory of God), the mission given in this city is ended with so much profit that, in the memory of men, there has never been one like it, not only as to attendance, morning and evening the homes remaining empty, but because of the most heartfelt compunction which everyone felt for his sins. These people applied the 'Thou' and 'Thou' of the sermon, each one to himself, and feared that it might be the last call; therefore, many general confessions were made, and many reconciliations and restitutions followed. At the time of his departure the guns of the fort were fired, as is done for the Cardinals and the Grandees of Spain, and he increased his title, which he already possessed by reputation, to be a good Servant of God. Let it be proclaimed, *ad majorem Dei gloriam*, that he is commonly regarded as a Saint on earth and in hope, and such I also believe him to be, and so I sign myself, *In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.* Twice on my knees I made him bless me in the presence of his companions. Your Paternity might have this letter of mine certified, and keep it *ad perpetuam memoriam;* for we cannot know what God has predisposed for future times, as he does not often give us such wonderful Servants of God."

By order of Benedict XIV our Saint went over from Terra-

cina to the city of Gaeta, whose people had desired him for a long time. The coming of the missionaries at that time, however, displeased the officers of that garrison, for they had incurred very heavy expenses and had made great preparations for a grand carnival, and foresaw that the money they had spent would be lost. Officers and soldiers therefore raised an uproar at first, but the prudent Religious, not wishing the devil to get the best of it in the matter, made them understand he had not gone there to hinder their amusements ; but simply begged them to attend the sermons. Thus he succeeded in calming them and began the mission. From the first days the commotion of the people was so great, and so many were the converts and repentant sinners, that it became necessary to place a large number of soldiers both in the church, around the confessionals, and at the house where the missionaries were lodging, and to establish there a *corps de garde*, to prevent any disorder that might have occurred through the crowds of penitents who were rushing to confession. Three evenings after the missions had begun the officers arranged to have a comedy played, and sent the ladies of the city an invitation to it, but, when they saw that only three of them attended it, they gave up every idea of carnival and theatre, and began to frequent the sermons and the other sacred functions, to the greatest edification of all the citizens. One of the noblest in rank, a person of high standing, having gone with great humility to see the missionary, apologized to him, on behalf also of the other officers, for having raised some opposition to the work of God. Though the agitation was general and so great, both in the Gaetans and in the soldiers, that at every sermon one could hear nothing but wailing and sighs, yet there was one, nevertheless, who turned a deaf ear to the Divine calls. He meant to persist in the unhappy state of a sinner, but God, by punishing him, made him furnish, against his will, a lesson and a fearful example to the whole city. During the sermon on the "Obstinate Sinner," our Saint, burning with extraordinary zeal, uttered, contrary to his usual way, these very words : "My heart tells me there is here present an obstinate sinner. Unless he repents at once, he is doomed. This very night God's punishment will overtake him !" And, lo ! there was really present a man who

entertained a scandalous intimacy, which he refused to give up, even though admonished and threatened by the bishop, and which he kept up even during the very days of the mission. This man, that same evening, at the third hour of the night, whilst he was taking supper with two priests and eating an egg, was attacked by a fearful stroke, and fell dead before the priests could pronounce absolution upon him, as they wished to do. His body turned black, and his features were so distorted and frightful-looking that he terrified everyone who looked at him. In consequence of this the city was so excited that it formed even a higher opinion of the missionary, and took, henceforth, all his words as so many oracles.

In the sermon on the Madonna he recommended that all should forgive any injuries received and be reconciled to their neighbors. The major of the fort, who, for a long time, had not even saluted his bishop, at the exhortation of God's Servant, immediately left the officers and went to kiss the hand of the prelate, who was on the throne assisting at the mission. He thereby drew tears of tenderness from his eyes and the eyes of the majority of those present.

The bishop and the officers desired our Saint to tarry there after the missions, in order to conduct the spiritual exercises; but, as he could not comply with their wishes, they had to remain satisfied with the good they had derived from his sermons. The benefit was so great that the Archdeacon Conca, in a letter written on the fifth day of March, 1744, thus described it to the Bishop of Terracina: "Your Most Illustrious Lordship cannot imagine the great fruit that has been derived from the holy missions of that great Servant of God, the Father Leonard of Port Maurice; it may be truthfully said that he has sanctified this city of Gaeta. Everybody perceived in this personage the special assistance of the Holy Ghost, joined to a zeal truly apostolic; hence he is held in very high esteem and veneration by all, so much so that it became necessary to keep a guard of soldiers constantly around him. The church was always so crowded that many people fainted, and his departure was sincerely regretted by all. I will not descend to particulars, reserving them for a day when I may visit you, and tell Your Most Illustrious Lordship, orally,

the prodigies of the Divine grace which the Lord has condescended to effect by means of His said Servant." From Gaeta, on the 17th of February, he started for Rome, where he stayed all Lent, and where, during Passion Week, he gave the spiritual exercises, as he had done at other times, in the Rospigliosi Palace, to the great benefit of large numbers of people, particularly of the nobles and wealthy, who attended them. After Easter he went to pursue the apostolic ministry in the diocese of Terracina for the second time, and then in that of Pontecorvo and other places. While holding a mission in Cave, diocese of Palestrina, he was presented with the image of the Blessed Virgin with her Divine Child, purposely painted for him by Chevalier Conca, the donor. The pious missionary was so well pleased with this appropriate present that, when he beheld that sacred image painted with a mien so sweet and lovely, he gave it the name of *Madonna del bell'amore* (the Madonna of the beautiful love), and afterwards carried it with him in all his missions.

This evangelical Laborer for the glory of God and the good of souls was so weakened by his many great labors in the Roman Campagna that, when he went from there to the Abbey of Farfa, his strength failed him during the first sermon he delivered in Bocchignano, and he fainted and fell half-dead upon the platform. He had to be carried home, and fear was entertained for his life; but recovering from his fainting spell, on the following morning, he insisted on resuming his apostolic ministry, and, having ascended the platform, said to his hearers these very words: "This donkey of my body threw itself to the ground, and needs chastising, that it may not get a notion to do it again, but may be strong on its feet and fall not." He made light of these faintings, to which he very often was subject, as a result of his great labors and the most austere penances which he constantly inflicted on his body. This indifference to pain he showed on several occasions, particularly in Civitaducale. Here he wished to open the mission on the same evening he arrived, although weakened by the long journey, which he made, according to his wont, barefooted and over stony roads. In the middle of the sermon he was compelled to stop and sit down, half-dead. Everybody present thought that for that evening

the services would be over; but he revived and resumed his preaching with such vigor that, placing a chain around his neck and a crown of thorns on his head, as he often used to do, he took a discipline in his hand to scourge himself. He would have succeeded in doing so, had not the Vicar-General ascended the platform and made him desist. These were the restoratives to which he treated his body, which, in imitation of the Father St. Francis, he called a *beast of burden*, and as such he treated it constantly, even during the most inconvenient journeys and the heaviest labors.

He afterwards went over to the Borgo di Rieti to give the missions. On the very day that he announced them, which was the 8th of July, 1742, a woman possessed by the devil came to him, and the devil, through her, gave him to understand that he would spare no efforts to disturb him in his ministry. In fact, during the first days of the mission, something strange always happened to distract the audience, through the machinations of the common enemy. During the first sermon, a cat (believed to be the devil himself in disguise) jumped from a very high window upon the head of a Religieuse of the Oblates (not cloistered), and, lifting up her veil, caused much noise and confusion among the people. Another evening a window frame fell, that, in the natural order, could not have done so. Many people were under it, listening to the sermon, but, although they were in such a position that one would expect many to be hurt, no one was injured. During other days, at one time a brick fell from the top of the church, at another a bar. These would naturally be expected to do great harm to the people who stood under them when they each fell, and yet no one sustained any injury. Finally, one morning, whilst the instruction was being delivered in the piazza, two bullocks yoked to a wagon, ran precipitously towards the numerous audience that stood there hearing it, and caused great noise and confusion, though not a single person was found to be hurt. In the meantime the woman possessed was roaring with laughter, and, through her tongue, the devil boasted of having himself caused these disturbances, and declared that he meant to cause even greater ones. The Servant of God was asked to order him to desist from doing any further

harm. This was done and the instruction closed in perfect peace and with great fruit.

One thing that St. Leonard undertook for the glory of God in the Borgo di Rieti was the defense of certain ecclesiastics, against whom hell had started a fierce persecution. Animated by holy zeal for the spiritual salvation of their neighbors, they had instituted among themselves in the city of Rieti a sacred league, made up of priests and clerics, to employ everyone, according to his capacity, in promoting the glory of God and to procure the salvation of souls. Hence, they catechised the children, instructed the prisoners, visited the sick, and labored hard to bring back the stray ones to the right path. At a stated hour they held a meeting at the residence of one of their number, and, after reading some devout book and listening to a spiritual conference, they concluded their meeting with a pious meditation. In a short time this pious society increased to the number of seventy members, who, besides the great amount of good they derived therefrom for their own souls, did also much good for the souls of others, by their instructions and catechising, as already said, and by the good example they gave to the whole city. The devil being envious of the great good accomplished, and fearful of its increase, which he foresaw, raised a big storm against the union of those ecclesiastics, in order to disperse and destroy it. He, therefore, caused sinister suspicions to arise in the minds of some persons against their meetings—suspicions which soon became public censures and slanders, and which raised an uproar in the whole city. The citizens went so far as to accuse these ecclesiastics of being ignorant, rash and proud, and some even treated them as a sect and lovers of novelties. Monsignor Camarda, then Bishop of Rieti, being well informed on the subject, in order to prevent slander and safeguard the honor and peace of those pious laborers, ordered that their conference and every other function should take place in the public church, and no longer in private houses. Though the wise prelate attended these public gatherings several times, and he himself proposed some doubts or cases, as did also many of the most judicious and respected ecclesiastics, the criticism, nevertheless, not only did not cease throughout the city, but rather

increased more and more every day, so that the members of that pious union, fearing to meet some great danger, decided to disband and give up their undertaking.

All this happened whilst St. Leonard was giving the missions, as already said, in Civitaducale, where he was informed of the situation (this place being four miles distant from Rieti). He sent word to those frightened ecclesiastics not to interrupt the exercises they had begun, nor to give up the work they had started, as it was truly the work of God. Having, afterwards, a few days later, gone to preach the penance, as we have likewise stated, in the Borgo di Rieti, he praised, publicly and privately, the ecclesiastics above mentioned, and bade them take part in the services of the mission, exhorting all to frequent their pious exercises and their sacred league under the title of Congregation of the Lovers of God. Moreover, he made it a point to attend the conferences himself, and in closing the mission he recommended attendance at them as one of the means to preserve its fruit and persevere in doing good. This sufficed to quiet the tumult and stop the unjust criticism ; for the citizens of Rieti, seeing that the Apostolic Man not only had approved of, but also recommended, this pious work, now began, to their own very great advantage and benefit, to frequent it, even those who had formerly opposed it and disapproved of it. In a short time this pious congregation was so firmly established that the bishop, well knowing the great good that was accruing to the souls of its members, by an Apostolic Brief, erected it into a Congregation of Secular Priests, under the above-mentioned title of the Lovers of God. At the same time he gave them a church in the centre of the city, where, by the constant attendance at the confessional, the daily preaching of the Divine Word and other devout practices, he kept open to the people of Rieti and surrounding places a Christian school, where they might learn the holy fear of God and the way to save their souls. Those zealous ecclesiastics who made up this congregation, after having made an authentic statement of all here related, and subscribed to by them and by that bishop, to make known the obligation they were under, for their existence, to the zeal and dauntlessness whereby they were sustained and defended by our Saint,

thus close their statement: "All those who, by these means, will succeed in saving their souls, shall, after God, acknowledge their salvation to be from Father Leonard, who, supporting so strongly this work when it was in danger of destruction, may be said to be its Founder."

He continued the apostolic ministry through several towns of the diocese of Rieti and the Abbey of San Salvatore Maggiore. While he was preaching in Belmonte, the Blessed Virgin desired to show to the world, by a sensible token, how pleasing to her was the devotion of her faithful Servant, who procured for her so many followers and so much honor, by solemnly exposing her image to the veneration of the people. During the last sermon, whilst this image was being carried in procession, a star was seen moving around the stand on which the sacred effigy rested during the entire time, causing great amazement and also touching the hearts of all who beheld it.

From Belmonte, having crossed over to Riofreddo, a town in the Tivoli diocese, whilst he was laboring here, as usual, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he received orders to go to Rome, where the Pope again wished him to give the missions. Therefore, in the month of November, 1742, this Apostolic Man returned to the Eternal City, and there, with wonderful zeal and energy, gave the missions, first in the Church of the Holy Apostles, which was attended by many Cardinals and, once, by the Pope himself; and, afterwards, in the Church of St. Lawrence, outside the walls. After the missions he prepared the Marquis Vincenzo Nunez for death. This nobleman, having made a general confession to him whilst sick in bed, pleaded to be assisted by him in his last, dreadful moments. Willingly did the Servant of the Lord comply. The pious cavalier, nearing death, said to him: "Father Leonard, I trust my soul into your hands;" and St. Leonard having replied: "And I commit it into the hands of God;" the man, peaceful and happy, rendered his soul to the Creator.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

St. Leonard is called upon to give the Missions in the Republic of Genova; thence he goes over to Lucca and Pistoja, and finally he is sent for the same purpose to the Island of Corsica.

FOR a long time the Most Serene Republic of Genova had longed to have for a missionary her great Hero and ours; hence, having received the order to go there, he left Rome for Florence, and thence going to Leghorn, he, at last, embarked for Genova. Incredible was the joy of those citizens at seeing him, for they, impatiently, had awaited his arrival. On the following day, which was Sunday, he was asked by the Superior of the Reformed Friars Minor, of the Convent della Pace, to preach a sermon in that church. The humble and obedient Servant of God, though wishing to remain hidden for a few days, took that request as a command, bowed his head, and, without saying a word against it, accepted the charge. No sooner had the news spread throughout the city that our Saint was to preach, than the church was filled with a concourse of people of all sorts and conditions. The crowds were so great that not only was the immense church filled, but the convent as well, and also the piazza, everyone waiting, as they said, to hear an apostle preach. He ascended the platform and spoke on the "Malice of Mortal Sin" with such a tone of voice and fervor of spirit that, at the very beginning of the sermon, they all wept aloud. Their compunction increased more and more towards the end, so that, to use the expression of him who wrote an account of it, because of the weeping and wailing, it seemed the day of the universal judgment. How great had been the fruit of this single sermon, became known not only because of the sorrow just referred to, but also because of the multitude of penitents that, on the following day, were seen around the confessionals, and who kept the priests occupied all day in hearing their confessions.

The Most Serene Senators saw his influence, and now knew, from their own experience, that what they had heard about this

zealous missionary was true. They, therefore, gave him ample faculties to exercise the apostolic ministry in all parts of the Riviera di Ponente, western coast of Liguria. In one of the principal places there were not wanting persons who raised opposition, as they did not wish the missions, and others who neglected to attend them; but God, evidently, punished them, as will appear from the instances which, from among the many that happened there, I now relate. A prominent person, who had strenuously opposed the coming of the missionaries, left to go elsewhere, when he actually saw them in his native place, so that he would not be obliged to hear their sermons. During his journey he was overtaken by a terrible storm, accompanied by thunder and lightning, which struck all around him; but, notwithstanding this, he continued his journey, till, while he was passing under a great rock it became detached and fell, nearly burying him under its ruins. This was regarded by everyone who heard of it as a manifest punishment of God. A woman of the same place, instead of going to hear the sermon, made up her mind, though chidden by her neighbors, to go to work in the country. When she arrived there she climbed up a tree. No sooner was she up than she fell headlong to the ground, wherefore she returned home, abashed. On the day following she desired to return to the country, not caring to hear the sermon; and having again climbed the same tree, a second time she fell from it, and broke one of her shoulders.

During the same mission there was a man who, being invited by friends to go and hear the missionary, uttered some words of contempt against him, and, lo! he was suddenly taken ill, so that he had to be carried to a hospital, where he died on the day following. That the hand of God, who punished him, might better be seen in this, it was permitted that when one of the Saint's companions went there to hear his confession, the managers of the pious place bade him hear the confession of another patient, forgetting the wretch for whom they had called him. As soon as the Religious had taken his departure, the miserable man expired suddenly, without the Sacraments or the assistance of a priest.

But if in this place St. Leonard met with opposition, not

so in Porto Maurizio, his birthplace. Here its citizens greatly rejoiced because they again beheld their fellow-citizen, whom they had not seen for thirty-four years. They received him with extraordinary demonstrations of joy, made all the arrangements with the greatest care, so that, during the mission, everything might proceed in an orderly manner, attended steadily his sermons and derived very great benefit therefrom.

When about leaving Porto Maurizio for Finale, four of his fellow-companions who were with him, fell seriously ill; and, whilst waiting for their recovery, he was called upon to give the missions in the city of Genova itself, where the attendance was so very great that it became imperative to erect the platform at the doors of the Church of the Reformed Friars Minor, that he might be heard from within the church and also from the piazza outside, both of which were crowded. But even this space was not sufficient, though very large, so he was compelled, sometimes, to preach in Bisagno (1) to such a multitude of people, that it was calculated to have exceeded the number of one hundred thousand. It was a cause of wonder to observe that at a simple motion from the missionary mounted on the platform, not a word nor the least noise could any longer be heard in that immense crowd, but all stood listening with the greatest recollection and in perfect silence. As a public and perpetual token of the missions given in Bisagno by our Saint, the Most Serene Senators decreed that, on the spot where the last sermon had been preached, three crosses should be erected on a pile of white and black stones, with the words, so often used by the Servant of God, engraved on them: "*Gesù mio, misericordia!*"—"My Jesus, mercy!" As the zealous missionary, in his sermon on the Most Holy Name of Jesus, had recommended that people place on the doors of their respective dwellings its august monogram (I H S), they at once ordered some sculptors to make a very large one in marble, with very beautiful ornaments and letters of bronze-gilt, representing the Most Holy Name of Jesus and that of Mary. On St. John the Baptist's day they caused it to be immured over the gate of Monte Reale. Whilst the sacred symbols were

(1) A large tract of ground (now built up) alongside the river of this name, outside the walls of Genova.—*Note of the Translator.*

being uncovered, amidst the firing of the cannons of the port and the ringing of the bells of all the churches of the city, the above-mentioned Senators attended the Solemn Mass in the Metropolitan Church of St. Lawrence, in which, as in all the churches of Genova, by order of the archbishop, the Collect or Prayer of the Most Holy Name of Jesus was recited. Moreover it was ordered that all the cities and walled towns should do likewise, viz., place over their gates the same symbol of the Most Holy Names of Jesus and Mary. In the meantime the Magistrate of the Republic obtained from the Pope permission to detain the Servant of God, in order to send him, later on, to the Island of Corsica, where, in fact, he went, after having given the missions in Lucca and Pistoja, with the usual most rich harvest of merits for himself and of fruits for his hearers.

The bark, called "Del Soccorso," which had been sent from Genova by the noblemen of that city to carry him to Corsica, anchored in the Gulf of Spezia, while he was giving the missions in Viareggio, Diocese of Lucca. Its captain despatched a felucca to Viareggio, and the Apostolic Man repaired in it to the ship, after having closed his mission abruptly, to the great grief of the people who had been deprived of some sermons. Finally, in the month of May, 1744, he set sail at Portovenere for Corsica. This island was, at that epoch, torn by revolutions, rivalries, factions and hatreds, causing endless disorders, strifes, homicides, and such disturbances that it had been almost reduced to extreme desolation; and all this proceeded from the fact that the greater part of the Corsicans no longer wanted to recognize the dominion that the Republic of Genova held over that island. Amidst such critical and trying circumstances, therefore, our Hero, fearing neither dangers nor disasters, was ready even to shed his blood for the salvation of those souls, and was convinced of doing God's will, which was manifested also by the approval of the Sovereign Pontiff. The latter, wishing for the peace and sanctification of those islanders, was well pleased that he should go to them and give them the missions. Dauntless, the Man of God embarked for Corsica, as I was saying. He was two days and three nights on the sea, during which time he preached to the sailors and soldiers, numbering over one hun-

dred. He touched them so that, as soon as they landed, they all made a general confession. It happened, during this voyage, that a poor sailor having been taken sick, grew worse, and desired to make a general confession to the Servant of God, who, after assisting him with great kindness, also recommended his soul, so that the poor fellow died happily in his arms. They reached Bastia, but were not permitted to land, because it was night-time, so it was necessary to wait till morning before leaving the bark. Our Saint, as soon as he set foot on land, went straightway to the Convent of the Reformed Friars Minor and there celebrated the Holy Mass, after which he visited the governor, and held a lengthy conference with him concerning the missions for which he had gone there.

The citizens of this place, who already held him in high esteem, because of the fame of his virtues and zeal that had preceded him, wished him to preach at least one sermon to them. They appealed for this privilege to the Provincial and to the Guardian of the convent, who induced him to comply with their request. On the day of St. Pasquale, then, after vespers, the governor with the senate and the nobility having proceeded to the church, the Minister of the Lord ascended the pulpit, and preached to the great audience that had gathered to hear him, with such fervor and force as to draw from the eyes of all present most abundant tears. They would have liked him to begin the missions in Bastia, but, on account of certain circumstances, the governor of that city deemed it better to have the missions given first in other places of the isle, and then, with all solemnity, in the capital. Our Saint therefore having taken the necessary instructions, in order to act prudently in his ministry, set out for the Diocese of Mariana. As a presage of what he was to suffer later on, he began to suffer much during this journey, for, being overtaken by the rain and not finding any sheltering-place along the road, he reached the Convent of Mariana so tired and in so bad a plight that, through weakness, he could hardly stand on his feet. When it was heard that the missionary had arrived, many people ran to see him, but all armed with arquebuses, pistols and knives. He was told that those people always went around so armed, and, when he saw the devastation of that poor

convent, which a few years previously had been set on fire by the French, during a war, he became even more convinced of the truth of the reports that had reached him already, concerning the ruin and great harm caused in that island by factions and discord. Here, then, he announced and made the first mission, and, having learned that the predominant sin in that place was that of hatred and vengeance, he began, in his sermons, to inveigh against the enormity and ugliness of those vices. And, in order to bring those people to lay down every enmity and rancor, he proposed to them two most efficacious means; one of which was to make, each one for himself, a tablet with the Most Holy Name of Jesus painted on it, similar to the one he was wont to show them every day at the end of his sermon, when he prayed the Divine Saviour to restore peace to that island. He begged them to fasten this tablet with the adorable figure over the doors of their houses, venerating it, every time they came in or went out, by bowing their head and saying: "*Gesù mio, misericordia!*"—"My Jesus, mercy!" with the intention, in saying this, that they would never take revenge. The other means was, to erect, wherever they were not already erected, the Stations of the *Via Crucis*, and, frequenting so devout an exercise, resolve each time to forgive all injuries, in order to imitate the example of patience given by Jesus Christ, and to suffer henceforth everything for His love. The efficacy of these and other similar means employed by the zealous Apostolic Missionary to secure the desired end, was experienced in the very city of Mariana. Here there were many inveterate enmities, and numerous families stood actually in arms, but when they heard the sermons and the burning words of the Man of God they laid down every hostility, and, throwing away the arms, they all embraced among themselves in perfect peace, crying bitterly, asking each other's forgiveness and kissing one another like brothers. This is the more astonishing, when it is known that all this happened in an instant, and that those who had nurtured mortal enmities for many years, at the simple voice of our Saint, not only became reconciled, but, moreover, desired to ratify the re-established peace by a public document.

On the day in which he preached on "The Madonna," a

certain man from the mountains chanced to pass through Mariana, armed, as usual. Seeing the great crowd of people waiting for the sermon, he asked why so many people were gathered there. He was answered that there was a mission going on; and he, chafing through rage, raised his voice and said: "What? even thus far the Genoese go, that they purposely send us missionaries to make us do as they please! But we do not want Genoese any longer here." When he had said this he stopped through curiosity to hear the missionary, and when the preacher was in the middle of his sermon, that is, when he placed a chain around his neck and, having asked forgiveness of the people, went to kiss the feet of the priests, the mountaineer lost all anger, and was so touched and moved that he was instantly changed into a different person, to the surprise of all. He wept with the rest, who were embracing and giving one another the kiss of peace, threw away the shotgun and other arms, and, kneeling at the feet of the Servant of God, gave a public attestation of his compunction and repentance.

Hearing of the abundant fruit gathered during the mission in Mariana, and of the peace in which, all disorders removed, its inhabitants were happily left, the people of Pieve di Casacconi, which was in such open, armed rebellion that every day some homicide took place, felt also a longing to have our Saint. Unable to oblige them at this time, because he had already been ordered to Casinga, he sent there some persons—there called Parolanti (talkers)—in order to see that the parties at enmity would promise, as they in fact did, to suspend all hostilities, and remain quiet until the time of the mission, which he assured them he would shortly give in their place. These people promised all the Saint demanded and faithfully kept their promise, for it is the custom of the Corsicans to keep their word; and so the missions were begun in Pieve di Casinga. Here, the population of seven towns flocking to attend them, it became necessary to preach all the time in the piazza. All were so moved and repentant that they waited in the churches from morning till evening to make their confession. Many unable to get through in one day, on account of the enormous crowd, truly sorry and contrite, would return many times, till, at last, they succeeded in

unloading themselves of their sins. The rivalries and enmities that predominated in that parish were more serious and greater in number than those he had found in Mariana; but our missionary, full of courage and zeal, Crucifix in hand, knew so well how to speak that finally those hardened hearts melted away, and, shedding most copious tears, they first approached to kiss the image of the Redeemer, and then, embracing one another and forgiving mutually all past offenses, made their peace. The Man of God, during this mission, raised his voice against those who used obscene language and sang scandalous songs. It so happened that a peasant in the country uttered such sinful words in the presence of some women. These, and his wife, who was also present, reproached him; but he, laughing at the threats launched against such as he by the missionary (which threats, to make him desist, they had repeated to him), answered that the world had always been the same. He had hardly said this than he was assailed by such fierce pains that, being carried home, he died shortly afterwards without the Sacraments. Filled with a holy fear by this occurrence, those people conceived so much more esteem and veneration for the Minister of God that they paid the greatest attention to all his advices, in order to carry them out faithfully, fearing, if they did not, that God might punish them.

Immediately after the missions given in this parish, in furtherance of his promise, he went to give the missions in the parish of Casacconi, which he found to be such a hotbed of discords and enmities that it seemed an utter impossibility to uproot them. But, notwithstanding this, the attendance at the sermons and the fruit thereof was so great that, on account of the multitudes, the churches were inadequate to hold them, so it became necessary to erect confessionals in the open air. Many thronged around the house of the missionary for three or four days at a time, and did not mind passing the night in the streets, in order to reach the feet of our Saint, to make their confession. Still it had not yet been possible to extinguish the fire of discord burning between some families, and threatening to break into a great conflagration in a few days. This caused the Man of God most poignant grief, because it brought spiritual harm to many souls;

for, in Corsica, ordinarily the enmity of one person passes to the whole family, and that of one town to another one ; so it was in Casacconi. There hundreds of persons were divided into two factions. The last day of the mission had dawned, yet the rivals had not made the least move towards reconciliation. The Minister of God ascended the platform, and, after having declaimed much, but in vain, against the revengeful ones, at last turned to those who would not agree to a treaty of reconciliation and peace. He protested, with apostolic freedom, that he not only did not intend to bless them, but that, on the other hand, he threatened them with the swift and terrible punishment of God, unless they would give up their enmities. He stood, then, Crucifix in hand, and was about to close the services, when they were suddenly converted, and presented themselves before the platform, crying. They laid down their arms and invited the other hostile faction to come over to them ; they became reconciled, and, for the greater security of the mutual forgiveness granted and the peace made, they caused a solemn document to be written and signed.

A young man of that neighborhood, hearing that there was in Casacconi such a concourse of people, betook himself there in order to find an enemy of his and kill him, as he himself said afterwards. He had approached the very numerous audience, armed to the teeth, the better to strike the fatal blow in the presence of all, when he heard that the missionary was just then giving the instruction on hatred and vividly depicting the ugliness of the sin of vengeance. He cried out with a loud voice : "When will that friar stop preaching peace?" No sooner had he uttered those words than he became as black as coal and stiff in all his limbs, so that, being unable to move in the least, he was carried on the arms of some men to a room in the convent, near the piazza where the mission was being preached. He was there laid on a bed, and St. Leonard ran at once to him, and, in his charity, exerted himself so much that, at last, the wretch, entering into himself, overcame his hatred, made his confession, and, having received absolution, quickly arose, sound and joyful, and returned a happy man to his home.

It happened in the same place that a man whose business

brought him to the place where the mission was being given, avoided attendance at the sermons for fear of being induced to forgive his enemies, of whom he had many. One of his own children earnestly begged him to go, at least once, and hear the missionary, but he, obstinate in his determination, jumped on his horse, and left. He had not gone very far when suddenly he was assailed by such sharp pains, with vomiting, that he had to be carried to the above-mentioned convent, where many exhorted him to resolve that he would attend the mission, so that he might be freed from his illness. He remained in his obstinacy a full hour ; but then, feeling that his pains were growing worse all the time and that the vomiting could not be stopped, being reduced to the point of death, he promised to go and hear the missionary. At once he recovered entirely, fulfilled his promise, and, having repented, he himself related this occurrence. In spite of all these facts, though, and all the zeal of this Laborer of the Lord, who spared no fatigue to extinguish the sentiments of hatred and vengeance in the souls of those people, many did not check this passion, which was too deeply rooted in their hearts.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

He continues to give the Missions in other places in the Island of Corsica. Various occurrences which happened during these Missions.

FROM Casacconi St. Leonard went to Castel d'Acqua, where there are four parishes, and whence he had been called to pacify that population, which was divided into two factions, each one composed of several hundred persons, all armed and on the verge of bloodshed. As soon as he reached there, over mountains and roughest roads, he saw that these people were wrathful and ready for vengeance. The Servant of God at first wept, but afterwards exerted himself and preached

so much that he induced them to pledge their troth not to harm one another during the mission, pending which he worked indefatigably, both by his public sermons and by private exhortations, to pacify them. All the people came to hear the mission, but the church looked more like a battlefield than a sacred place; for on one side stood one faction with its chief and hundreds of men armed with shotguns and poignards, and on the other side the opposing faction, similarly numerous and armed; while between them stood the missionary on the platform. He who reads this can easily imagine how cautiously the Saint must have spoken to people so fierce, in order not to irritate them, and how much he must have had to fear lest those enemies, seeing one another face to face, should come to blows and massacre one another under his very eyes. He saw at last that he was unable to mollify the hardness of their hearts so as to bring about the conclusion of the desired peace, because, when one party was ready to be reconciled the other resisted. The hour of the last sermon had arrived, and after that the time of truce agreed upon would expire, so he made up his mind to leave. He had, therefore, ascended the platform to bid the people farewell, though greatly distressed, on account of leaving them in that terrible disorder, when suddenly they all crowded around him, making friends with one another, and leaving all questions to him to settle. Unutterable was the joy of the Servant of God and of all the people in the surrounding towns, who, on account of this conflict, were already lamenting an imminent, deplorable havoc. Whilst the *Te Deum* was being sung in thanksgiving to God for having softened those hard hearts, the men themselves shot off the firearms which everyone of the two opposing parties was carrying, in token of the satisfaction they felt at the concluded reconciliation and the re-established peace.

Vengeance was the Corsicans' predominant passion, and, consequently, the cause of a thousand other evils and disorders, as the Servant of God could see with his own eyes. Journeying through that island, he could only find ruined farms and houses, families dispersed, and troops of persons in arms scouring the country in search of their enemies, just as one goes hunting for ferocious beasts. He therefore strove with all his might to

uproot from their hearts so brutal, detestable and harmful a vice. Hence, in all his sermons, he inveighed against this sin, and succeeded in gaining glorious victories. In Orezza, Diocese of Aleria, the invectives of the Servant of God against said vice brought some people spontaneously to the platform of the missionary to offer forgiveness to their enemies. Two of these, during the sermon on "Judgment," wished to give in writing their forgiveness to enemies from whom they had received very grave injuries. A woman's son had been murdered on the day previous, and another woman's husband, according to the habit of those islanders, had been also butchered by the former's relatives in revenge. As soon as they heard the news of the two homicides, the women overcame their grief, and repressed their anger, moved by the sermons they had heard from our Saint in the parish of Ampugnani, and not only granted forgiveness, but went, each one, to see her own relatives, and begged them to do so also. They besought them so fervently that, on the same day, before the corpses were buried, to the edification and amazement of everybody, the families became reconciled, and the door to ulterior vengeances was shut. In the same town of Orezza a certain personage who, on account of his position, should have promoted the mission, opposed it; and when he heard it announced, increased his opposition, speaking ill of it and saying that it was only a beggarly pretext for secondary ends, and not for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, as the missionary protested. How much the evil talk of this individual, from which so much harm might come to the hearers and the preacher, displeased the Lord, was soon made manifest; for this slanderer was suddenly taken ill, and was visited by St. Leonard, who warned his relatives to influence him to receive the last Sacraments, because death was near. In fact, only two days afterwards he died; and this was regarded by everybody as an evident punishment of God.

A certain clergyman, hearing of many of these warnings, ridiculed them, and declared that they were not punishments of the Lord, but accidents that were bound to happen, according to the order of nature. But as soon as he uttered these words, he fell over a great precipice nearby, and, rebounding from cliff

to cliff, remained hanging to a tree by his nether garments in such a manner that his whole body dangled over a very deep chasm. Unable to help himself in the least, and every moment in danger of falling down, because of the weight of his body, which was tearing his clothes to threads, he cried with all his might, asking help and relief. People around, who had heard what he had said, without moving in the least, muttered among themselves: "He would not believe in the mission, and asserts that everything comes from natural causes; let us leave him to his fate, to tumble down." In the meantime the wretch, suspended in the air, continued to recommend himself, and protested, at the same time, that his plight was a punishment of God for having dared to despise the missions. Then the spectators, being moved to compassion, by means of ropes lowered into the precipice, drew him out rather dead than alive from fright.

The fame of the great good accomplished in these missions by St. Leonard had already extended throughout the whole island; hence, the people living beyond the mountains wished to have him also, and begged him, with fervent petitions, to visit their towns and there preach the missions; but he could not then do so, because he still had much to do in the dioceses of Mariana and Aleria, where the parishes were very numerous. Besides the people of these parishes, many others came from beyond the mountains to hear his sermons, journeying several days to have that pleasure. The churches were small and half demolished, so the missions were preached in chestnut-groves or other woods, where the platform was erected in the most open space. The poor people, who came from a great distance, in their eagerness to hear the Word of God and confess to the missionary or one of his companions, often spent several days at the seat of the mission, living on bread and water, which they had brought with them. The Servant of God perceived this, and was filled with courage and fervor, so that, dauntless and burning with zeal, he would go through those rough and inaccessible places, preaching, instructing, hearing confessions and bringing about reconciliations between enemies. Many a time, in journeying from one place to another to give the missions, he was

compelled to travel in the darkness of night, having only a burning pine torch to light his footsteps. While traveling from Omessa to Niolo, places situated on the highest and roughest mountains of Corsica, he started in the month of August, at six o'clock in the evening, carrying in his hand this burning pine wood, lest he might fall into some precipice. He had walked ten continuous hours over those stony and treeless mountains without stopping, when he thought he had done climbing, but found that there was still another mountain to ascend, two miles high. Almost fainting and nearly prostrated from fatigue and the excessive heat, it became impossible for him to pursue his journey; hence he was carried by two men, who had gone forward to meet him, to the nearest hamlet. Though he could not stand on his feet, still, when he had wiped off the perspiration and taken a little breath, he determined to celebrate the Holy Mass, as he was wont to do, even after the longest journey and the most exhausting fatigue, never omitting it. After Mass he refreshed himself with some bread, and again resumed his journey; but he was unable to stand through weakness, and because his feet were all cut by the sharp stones of the mountains, therefore, he was compelled to submit to being carried, against his will, on a chair supported by poles, and thus he reached Niolo.

The people of this parish were accustomed, for the greater part of the year, to dwell in the woods and on the seashore, leaving the women with some old men and the clergy in the town. They were all ignorant and ruthless, and little better than the wild beasts they were living with in those places. The indefatigable Laborer of the Lord toiled much to bring the priests to lead a regular life, and to root out the usury, theft and homicide which occurred constantly there; but, with the Divine help, his zeal succeeded in everything. In fact those poor people listened to the sermons with so much eagerness and compunction that they laid down their hatreds and other vices, made peace with one another and with God. There was but one young man, who was determined to have revenge on two brothers who, eight days previously, had killed his sister, and also on the man who had asked her hand. He would not forgive nor be reconciled to the murderers. Nay, he was so determined to take his

revenge that, lest he might be induced to give up his hatred, he would not even go once to the mission, though exhorted, particularly one evening by his parents, to do so. He protested that he did not want to hear the missionary for the above reason; but, whilst he was saying this, his house mysteriously caught fire and was reduced to ashes, not a thing being saved. Frightened and dismayed, on the following morning he went to the sermon, and publicly reconciled himself with his enemies, solemnly promising to keep peace with them. Many were the incidents of this kind, by which, in this, as in other missions, God made known that He sanctioned the words and the actions of His minister; so that the reverence of the people towards St. Leonard reached such a height that at times it became even indiscretion. In Niolo itself one day, while the Saint was ascending the platform, a man, intending to cut out a piece of his habit with a knife, wounded him in the hand; and another one, who, one morning, as the Servant of God was wending his way from the altar to the sacristy, tried to do the same thing, nearly cut his feet; hence, it became imperative to guard him, lest he might receive harm through this indiscreet devotion.

From Niolo having proceeded to the parish of Corti, which was before this time a considerable town, he found it all in ruins, on account of the disorders and hostilities raging in it, and because, too, it had a fortified castle, garrisoned by numerous soldiers, many of whom were heretics; hence, his zeal in this place was well tried. Among the great number of conversions made here, there were those of two Calvinist soldiers, who, having gone to hear the preaching, determined to abjure their errors in the presence of the missionary himself, and, having petitioned thereupon the Vicar-General of Aleria, who was in attendance, after being duly instructed, abjured their sins publicly, in the church. A shepherd was exhorted to go to the mission, and refused to do so, using the excuse that, if he left the country, the missionary would not keep watch over his sheep. On the night following he lost two of them, and on the next night again three others. The shepherd then, fearing this to be a punishment of God, made up his mind to go to the sermon, but only for a day; because he felt ever apprehensive that his

sheep might be lost or devoured by wild beasts; therefore, he returned immediately to the country; and, lo! that very night five of them died. This time his eyes were opened. He made a resolution to attend the mission till the end. Recommending his flock to the Divine Providence, he assisted at the sermons till the very last day; and when he returned to his flock he found it at the same spot where he had left it, not one of his sheep either dead or lost.

As a whole volume would be required to describe the missions and all the doings of St. Leonard in the Island of Corsica, and what he there endured and suffered, we will leave some of these things for Part Second of this book, and will simply mention here what happened to him during the last mission given in a locality called the Isolaccia. He found here more savage and obstinate people than in any other place in Corsica; for they nearly all dwelt in the fields and the woods, living upon the robberies they perpetrated on their neighbors, neglectful of the Sacraments, ignorant of the things of God, and leading a wild life. They had been divided for twenty years into two numerous, hostile factions, each so revengeful that they often committed the most cruel and horrible homicides. The Apostolic Man did not spare labor in trying to mollify those ferocious spirits; finally, one faction, frequenting the sermons, surrendered and showed itself ready to be reconciled with the other. But the second party had for chief a man named Lupo (Wolf), suitably named so because of his ferociousness and the kind of life he was leading. This party never went near the missionary to hear him preach; and was not willing to accept the peace, nay, Lupo forbade it, and hence those wretches were hung at his bidding. He even forbade them to listen to any talk of reconciliation and peace, and they, therefore, remained in their obstinacy and hardness. The Servant of God, very much grieved, decided to depart and go elsewhere. During the night preceding his departure the floor of the house in which he was lodging, which was a wooden one, caught fire, and at once blazed into a large conflagration. St. Leonard was, with his companions, in a room, or rather cabin, next to the fire, and, unable to secure his safety by flight, he began to call for help from the window. He was

with great difficulty taken out and carried to a place of safety by the people who ran to his rescue. On the morning following this fearful night he celebrated Mass and preached a sermon in the church. After he had returned home, in going from one room to another, a board gave way under his feet, so that he fell suddenly to the floor below, and struck his side against a beam, which kept him from descending to the other floor and being killed on the spot. Upon this sad occurrence, some persons who were waiting there to go to confession ran to him, and, finding him breathless and nearly dead, they lifted him up and rendered him all the assistance they could. Through their labor and the kind attention of his companions, after some time he revived and began to breathe. But they realized that his condition was extremely serious, and, as there were neither physicians nor medicines in the place, they resolved to transfer him to Bastia. This town was many days distant, and, to reach it, it was necessary to cross rough and stony mountains. As there was no other way to carry him, it became necessary to fasten two poles to a chair, and bear him, seated thus, upon the shoulders of men. When the above-mentioned Lupo heard of the mishap that had befallen the missionary, and the manner in which he was to be carried away for medical treatment, he too, with many of his obstinate faction, came forward to bear him on his shoulders for a long part of the journey. The Servant of God was told by his companions that one of the carriers was the ferocious Lupo, who, in order not to give up his revenge, had never attended the sermons and had even forbidden his satellites to do so. He was pleased and rejoiced in the Lord, and, when a place was reached where a change of carriers was to be made, burning with holy zeal, though suffering much and half-dead, he turned to Lupo with evangelical liberty and imperatively called to him: "Come here, Lupo, and kneel down." That man, formerly so proud and cruel, became at once meek and humble; from a Lupo (Wolf) he became an Agnello (Lamb), and promptly knelt, whilst the Apostolic Man continued: "I want you to make the peace." Lupo, without a word of contradiction or resistance, instantly replied to him: "Holy Father, as you so wish, so be it;" and taking up his shotgun, which he

had laid on the ground, he fired it away in the air in token of joy, crying out several times: "Peace! Peace! Peace!" Following the example of their chief, all the men of his faction did likewise, all firing their guns. The entire party returned to their homes amidst cheerful and joyful cries, offering the contrary faction forgiveness and peace. How much this stroke of Divine grace cheered the heart of St. Leonard, who blessed and heartily thanked the Worker of such wonders, can be imagined by anyone who possesses sentiments of piety and religion. After this incident, continuing the journey in the manner aforesaid, Bastia was finally reached. There most prominent physicians made use of all their art, and applied remedies calculated to bring him back to health. The governor of the republic also showed the greatest solicitude for his recovery; but Corsica was extremely cold because of the snow and the piercing winds; therefore, it was deemed necessary that he leave the island and return to the milder climate of the continent.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

St. Leonard visits several Provinces and Dioceses of Italy, and then gives the Missions in Rome to prepare the people for the Anno Santo (Jubilee Year).

IN the month of November, 1744, St. Leonard left the Island of Corsica upon the galleon "Capitana," belonging to the Most Serene Republic of Genova, and, after a few days' voyage, landed at Porto Venere, where, on account of the bad weather, he tarried for five days; after which, embarking again, he sailed for Genova. As soon as he arrived there, now being entirely recuperated from the injuries he had met with in the Island of Corsica, he began once more to exercise the apostolic ministry. Though there was, up to this time, no instance on record of any minister of God having preached in the Metropolitan Church of Genova from a platform, yet the canons of this

church caused a very magnificent and richly-adorned one to be erected for our Hero, who preached the missions there. In his audience were the Archbishop, the Most Serene Doge, and an almost innumerable multitude of people. Simply seeing him or hearing him preach caused the hearts of the people to be so moved that they all immediately cried out asking God's mercy, and felt so repentant that throughout the whole church one could hear and see nothing but sighs and tears. One of the principal ladies of the city sent him, as a gift, a large golden heart, that he might fasten it to the Madonna he carried with him in his missions ; but the true son of St. Francis, after looking at it, sent it back to the dame, with his thanks for her generous offer, telling her, at the same time, that he was vowed to poverty and therefore did not feel free to handle precious objects, not even as a matter of devotion. Through him it was suggested to the pious lady that she might send the heart to the Madonna del Monte of the Reformed Friars Minor, with the assurance that the most blessed Virgin would be pleased with her gift. The lady, without hesitation, complied, remaining much edified by his detachment from earthly things and the love he bore to holy poverty.

From Genova he went through the Riviere (eastern and western coast of Liguria or Gulf of Genova), preaching the penance everywhere, with his wonted zeal, much to the profit of the people of this section. While he was conducting this work in Chiavari, he received letters from his Father General and from the Most Eminent Secretary of State, in which he was ordered to return to Corsica in order to complete the work begun for the good of those souls. Having read these letters he reverently kissed them and, bowing down his head, said : "*Fiat voluntas Dei*"—"God's will be done," and was ready to return there, in spite of all he had suffered, and was sure to suffer again if he would return there. He would surely have gone, had he not received word, a few days later, not to sail for Corsica until he would receive a new order. He continued, therefore, to preach in the towns of the Riviere, and, as in those days Spanish and German soldiers were passing through them, he labored much to raise the frightened spirits of the citizens, exhorting them to recommend themselves to the Lord, in order to be exempt

from those dangers which, under such circumstances, are ordinarily met with. But, in spite of prevailing fears and dangers, the attendance at his sermons was everywhere very great, and the fruit derived from them more than abundant. In Sestri, where the citizens were much distressed by the passing to and fro of these troops, the people took particular care to attend all the sacred functions, not omitting any. So attentive were they that, during the mission or any other devout exercise, the stores were closed and all other business was suspended, in order that all might hear the missionary and do whatever he would order or suggest to them. Notwithstanding this the Saint perceived that, on account of the wars then raging between Savoyards and Genoese, the missions could hardly be continued in this section. Therefore, after obtaining leave, by letter, from the Archbishop of Genova and the Most Serene Senators, he set out for Levanto, and thence for Lucca, promising, however, to return at their request when peace should be restored.

He conducted many missions in the Diocese of Lucca, where he was so well known and so highly esteemed for his virtues, and gathered most abundant harvest through the contrition of these people. Oftentimes, by their cries of repentance, they compelled the sacred minister to interrupt his sermon in order to give place to the clamors of the people. These missions being over, he went to Ferrara and thence crossed over to Bologna. He suffered greatly, during this journey, from the piercing pain produced by the sores and cuts on his feet, and reached Ferrara in so weakened and exhausted a condition that he could neither walk nor stand on his feet. In spite of this he determined to begin the missions without delay. The attendance at these was so large that, the church being insufficient to contain all the people, it became necessary, during the latter days, to preach in the great piazza before the cathedral. This was much crowded also, so it was deemed prudent to place soldiers around, to prevent any disorder that might be caused by so great a multitude. St. Leonard won such great love and reverence in Ferrara, and left the morals of its citizens so improved, that, in order to satisfy the devotion of the people, his portrait was obtained and then engraved on copper, from which many copies were printed, to the great satis-

faction of all, who vied with one another to get them. In that Metropolitan Church St. Leonard erected the "Perpetual Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament," and after this and other works of piety wrought here for the glory of God and the welfare of souls, he departed for the Diocese of Bologna.

Here he conducted many missions and preached many sermons. In Minerbio there assisted two Most Eminent Cardinals, viz., Doria, Legate of Bologna, and Crescenzi, Legate and afterwards Archbishop of Ferrara, who took part in the procession of penance that was made there, and by their piety gave the greatest edification to the many people who had gone there. Having recommended one day, in a sermon, that the Blessed Sacrament should be accompanied to the sick with greater pomp and devotion, it so happened that one morning during the mission IT was to be carried to the miserable hut of a poor sick man, half a mile away from the church. The signal being given by the bell, quickly the people ran in great numbers, the majority of them with lights, to accompany the Holy Viaticum. The above-named Most Eminent Cardinals also took part in it, and having walked all the way, after the sick man had received Holy Communion, they remained for some time in that poor shanty to console the inmates, particularly the sick man, who died shortly afterwards. The citizens of Ferrara desired to have our Hero back again soon, but he was destined to work among the mountains of Bologna, and could not satisfy their wish. He set out, then, towards Treppio, and during this journey he suffered such very great inconveniences and privations that, when he reached the foot of the ascent to Bargi, his eyesight and strength failed him. He could go no further, not being able even to stand up. As night had set in and it was pitch-dark, it became necessary for one of his companions to carry a lantern to show the path, for another one to pull him up by means of a rope, and for a third to support his shoulders. In this manner, rather than remain there till morning, they reached Bargi in the middle of the night. Here St. Leonard was attacked by excruciating pains and a very serious stomach disorder, and was forced to rest all the day following. He then resumed his journey, arriving at Treppio with his feet all lacerated and every

limb aching. The population awaited this New Apostle with great longing, the good odor of his saintliness having preceded him; and the fruit that was earned from his missions, both here and in all other parts of the province of Bologna, was abundant in proportion to their desire. St. Leonard was one of those preachers who, uniting the eloquence of his words with the efficacy of his virtuous actions, preach by word and example, and consequently he inveighed by both sermon and practice against vice and exhorted all to practice virtue; thus he succeeded in triumphing over the hearts of those who heard and observed him. As soon as the Apostolic Man reached the town called Bagni della Porretta, and before he had announced the beginning of the missions, the people were so moved that, on the morning before the opening, many priests were obliged to remain a long time in the confessionals to hear the confessions of numberless penitents. Here the attendance at the mission was very great, many persons coming from towns and villages twenty-five miles distant to hear him. Therefore, the capacity of the church being insufficient to hold so many thousands of people, again it became necessary to preach in the open country.

From this place our Saint went over to preach the penance in the city of Ravenna, where he accomplished much good in the souls of its citizens, as can be seen from the statement of the archbishop, Monsignor Guiccioli, which is to be found, together with others, at the end of the first Life, dedicated to Benedict XIV. After finishing the missions in Ravenna, he gave them in several other places in the diocese. In Argento, one of these towns, the mission was opened in January, and, although it was very cold and rainy, several confraternities came in procession from a distance of thirty miles and more to see the Servant of God, and hear his sermons. But as Lent was approaching, during which, in order not to interfere with the Lenten sermons, he was wont to suspend his missions, from the Diocese of Ravenna he passed over to that of Ferrara, being invited to visit it by Cardinal Crescenzi, its archbishop. Here he was kept busy in various monasteries, hearing the confessions of the Religieuses, and preaching unto them with so much advantage to their souls that they vied with one another to have him. During Passion

Week he determined to make his customary spiritual exercises; but, as there were none of his Retreats near, he resolved to make them in the Chartreuse, where he remained until Holy Saturday, totally apart from every creature and conversing with God alone. Hence, he came forth from that monastery burning more than ever with zeal, and, thus inflamed, he then continued his apostolic labors in that diocese. In Occhiobello and in Copparo he assisted the Lord Cardinal Archbishop at all the sacred functions. This dignitary every morning, after celebrating Mass, administered Holy Communion himself to the people, who were edified by the sight, as well as by his accompanying the Most Holy Viaticum to the sick of those towns, leaving them, if poor, no insignificant alms. Very abundant was the harvest our Saint gathered in this diocese, from which he went back to that of Bologna. Here he preached the missions on the lawn of St. Joseph's Church of the Servite Fathers, outside Porta Saragozza, and among the many conversions which took place, there was one that deserves to be related here to the greater glory of God and of His Servant. There was in this place a young girl of about twenty years, who was married to a bailiff, and was leading a licentious and scandalous life. One day she went to the mission, and, as soon as she heard the voice of the missionary, she felt so moved by the Divine grace that suddenly her whole heart changed. From a stone of scandal she became a mirror of exemplary life and modesty to the whole city of Bologna. Moreover, a worthy pastor of that city attests that this same young convert, persevering in the good thus begun, not only steadily attended to her own sanctification by constant prayer, the frequent use of the Sacraments and other good works; but also helped others by the interest she took in the saving of other young girls. She went around Bologna, bringing the fallen ones to repentance, and removing the innocent ones from danger, even so far as to keep fourteen of those girls in her own house, where she gave them some work to do and instructed them in the devout Christian life. During this mission, also, the Man of God had recommended almsgiving, and five hundred scudi (dollars) had been collected, which he would not, by any means; touch, so they

were turned over to the building fund of the most holy Madonna, called the Madonna of St. Luke.

The missions in Bologna and other cities of this diocese being concluded, he went on the same errand to Ancona, where he received orders to proceed to Rome; which he did. During his journey he stopped to preach in the city of Spoleto and in other towns, with such vigor and zeal, that, though he was tired and worn out from having traveled in the cold and rainy month of December, the people showed their sorrow and devotion long after his departure. This was seen particularly in Terni. He had recommended in the sermons preached here in the beginning of January that, during the coming carnival, they should refrain from masquerading, theatre-going and other pleasures usually indulged in during carnival time. Though the missionary was gone when that season came, still they not only abstained from all these amusements, but, more than this, from the fourth day of February till the twenty-seventh of the same month they spent their entire time in works of piety and religion. During these twenty-four days they caused the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to be made successively in several churches. Crowds of people, together with the Brothers of various pious confraternities, visited these churches barefooted, with crowns of thorns on their heads and heavy crosses on their shoulders, whilst others scourged themselves even unto blood, to the edification of the whole city, which breathed nothing but compunction. On the last day, when the carnival expired, a solemn procession was organized from the city to the Convent of the Grazie of the Minor Observants, situated a mile off, in order to visit the Stations of the *Via Crucis* erected there. On this occasion, too, the major part of the people walked barefooted, or carried devout instruments of penance, and all deported themselves with edifying modesty and devotion. This was the fruit our Saint gathered from his labors in Terni, though he had departed from that city; because his words and examples remained so impressed in the minds of those devout hearers, that they changed the sinful licenses of the carnival season into works so good and profitable to their spiritual welfare.

In the meantime the Apostolic Man reached Rome, and

was at once told to go and give the missions in the Abbey of Subiaco, and after that in Arpino, then in Aquila and other cities. In all of these places he worked with his wonted zeal and industry for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. It is impossible to tell how much good he accomplished in removing abuses, converting sinners and reforming morals, although, worn out by long and arduous journeys and by the austerity of his mode of living, as well as by his uninterrupted hard labor, so that he often found himself at the point of succumbing under the extraordinarily heavy burden. The following narrative will show the difficulties and hardships of his journeys: While traveling from Monterotondo to Magliano in the Sabina, during November, 1748. he was accompanied by two persons, who, on the plea of shortening the road, made him go through some fields which, on account of the rainy season, were full of water and ice. This most painful journey lasted seven hours, over roads so bad and impracticable that the Servant of God had no longer strength to continue, and, the night supervening, he fell to the ground fainting and half-dead, unable to go a step farther or even to move. In this distressing condition one of them was sent to Morlupo, not very far distant, to get a beast of burden to carry the patient to that place; but when it was led to him they had great difficulty in persuading him to mount it, so zealous was he of the observance of his rule and so afraid that he might break it by doing so. But, at last, he consented, and was conducted to the Reformed Friars Minor of the above place. The missions in the Sabina being over, he was called to Rome by the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, that during that year, 1749, he might with his sermons prepare the people for the Universal Jubilee, which was to be celebrated the year following. For this purpose the Pope ordered him to deliver sermons successively in various quarters and churches of the city. He preached with great energy and zeal to an immense concourse of people of all conditions, and with much fruit for his hearers. Rome, shaken by the thunders of his voice, seemed to have become another city, judging by the change of morals, and by the retiring and modest demeanor which could be noticed in everybody. The harvest gathered during these missions was so abundant that, to tell the

least part of their success, would require a long history in several volumes.

The Piazza Navona was assigned to him as the first battle-field upon which to fight against vice and hell. The multitude was so great that people wondered at it, especially at the last sermon. On that day, not only were the windows, at which stood the Roman nobility, crowded, but the vast piazza was closely packed, as well as all the streets leading to it. This mission lasted fifteen days, during which the Sovereign Pontiff went four times to hear him. Before beginning the sermon the Blessed Sacrament was always exposed, and Benediction with IT given at the end. One evening the Pope himself determined to give Benediction, while on all other evenings it was given by one of the Lord Cardinals, who, even to the number of twenty, attended the sermons, which were begun always with a colloquy that the Servant of God addressed to the Most August Sacrament. After the sermon of the last day the Holy Father, who was in attendance, accompanied by just twenty Cardinals, ascended a nearby loggia, and from it imparted to the immense multitude the Papal Benediction, which concluded the first of the series of devout and salutary exercises. Two things, among others, were a source of wonder during this mission. The first of these was that the people who, on account of the distance, could not possibly hear the voice or distinguish the words of the Apostolic Man, no sooner saw him on the platform than they could not control their sorrow, and at once began to weep, uniting their tears and cries with those of the rest of the vast audience. The second was that, though it was then the month of August and the sun, therefore, was scorching, nevertheless men and women of all conditions, desiring to be near the missionary, took their places in the large piazza early in the morning, and remained there even during the hottest part of the day, exposed to the burning heat. They thought nothing of their great discomfort, but waited until the Man of God made his appearance, when, at his simple beckoning, a deep silence fell upon that army of people, so that there did not seem to be a single person present.

The other two missions were preached in the Piazza of

Sta. Maria in Trastevere and in the Church of Sta. Maria sopra Minerva. These were honored also by the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff, who likewise wished to close them with the Papal Benediction. In order to conceive some idea of the great blessings obtained from these missions, it will suffice to reflect that, though Rome is full of churches and confessors, the latter labored from morning till night to hear the penitents who, before daylight, crowded around the doors. Early one morning, a few days after the closing of the missions, while St. Leonard was in his Retreat of St. Bonaventure, he was visited by the Brothers of the Society of St. John Beheaded, and asked to use his powers in trying to convert a Sicilian, who was condemned to death, because, eight days previously, he had killed a priest. The man not only refused to repent, no matter how great the influence brought to bear upon him, but also answered continually: "Vengeance!" and obstinately persisted in his impenitence. Though before leaving the convent the Holy Man said clearly to the Marquis Ximenes, who had gone there to accompany him, that this man would not be converted, because God, in His hidden, inscrutable judgment, had abandoned him, still he brought all his fervor to bear in order to shake the wretch's resolution; but in vain, so that, though in mercy the execution was delayed till evening, he persisted in his obstinacy, asking for vengeance, even with the rope around his neck. St. Leonard thus saw, to his regret and the fright of the immense multitude, his prediction fulfilled. From the very ladder of the scaffold, upon which was hanging the body of that unfortunate man, he spoke with such vehemence on final impenitence that he drew tears from the eyes of all; and among those who afterwards went to his feet, converted and contrite, to make their confession, was one sinner who had not approached the sacred tribunal for more than twenty years. This man came forward to confess himself with great sorrow, protesting that he was deserving of the death which that miserable, impenitent man had just encountered. From this occurrence our Saint was wont to take occasion, afterwards, to remark that preachers should never presume of themselves, no matter how great the good they accomplish for souls, as God had clearly demonstrated in the above-men-

tioned instance that He it is, and not man's tongue, who moves and softens sinners, though His truly terrible and tremendous justice sometimes permits His amiable mercy to triumph, as happened in that saddest case, where many were converted at the horrible spectacle.

The Jubilee Year approaching, His Holiness ordered the spiritual exercises to be made, during November, in the churches of the Trinità dei Monti, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini and Sta. Cecilia. When these were finished the Servant of God, in the month following, gave the missions in St. Andrea della Valle, and then withdrew to his Convent of the Polveriera, where he resolved to make the holy exercises himself, as though in helping others he had done no good for his own soul. Therefore, on the evening before he made his retreat, he knelt in the public refectory, and asked permission of his Superior to begin it, and also begged his blessing. He protested before all the friars that he possessed but the habit of a Religious, and recommending himself, therefore, to the prayers of all, he burst into tears, and could not utter another word. One can imagine with how much recollection and profit to his own soul he made those exercises ; it is enough to say that, having gone, at their conclusion, to the Pope's feet, and being asked by His Holiness what fruit he had derived from them, he answered that the fruit was an ardent desire to die soon, in order to go and enjoy his God.

Some days afterwards, while on his way to hear the confession of a sick man, he injured one of his feet, and, according to his habit, did not mention it to anybody. It happened that the sore became inflamed, and, being unable to rest his foot on the ground through the pain, it became necessary to operate on it. Later on, erysipelas set in, which compelled him to lie in bed several days, so that it might heal. This reached the ear of the Pope, who with sovereign condescension went in person to visit him, and, knowing that the Saint had often cut his feet and suffered inconvenience by journeying barefooted, he ordered him for the future to use sandals and not to leave Rome without his express license. After conversing with him confidentially for a half-hour, he left him with his Apostolic Benediction. The Holy Year (1750) had arrived, so, as soon as our Saint had

recovered, he was unable, in his charity, to remain idle, and, therefore, he employed his time in hearing the confessions of the Religieuses of various monasteries and in giving the spiritual exercises to several confraternities, in one of which, viz., that of Trinità dei Pellegrini, he was enrolled among the number of the fellow-Brothers. In the meantime the city of Rome was giving evident signs of the profit derived from the former missions. The devotion was so great, and the piety with which the people visited the Basilicas and deported themselves on all occasions, was so noticeable, that foreigners were greatly edified, and the oldest inhabitants said that they could not remember having ever before seen so much piety and recollection in the people of Rome, as they saw in that year, which, therefore, could be truly styled the *Anno Santo* (Holy Year).

With the same charity, with which, as we have said, he labored in many different monasteries and confraternities, he also applied himself steadily in his own Convent of St. Bonaventure to hear the confessions of the great numbers who flocked to him, even from far-away places; so that it may be stated that he gathered, this year, no less fruit from the tribunal of penance than he would have gathered by preaching the missions from the platform. Among the many facts which might be quoted here, I deem it proper to mention two only, to confirm what I say and what has been referred to in regard to the missions conducted by him in Piazza Navona the year preceding. Whilst engaged in these, to the benefit of those who attended, their fame spread also to places far away, and reached the ears of a man living five hundred miles from Rome, whose conscience was loaded with many sins which he had never confessed. He conceived the desire to confess them to St. Leonard, and, for this purpose, he set out on foot, it being the Holy Year, towards Rome. He arrived there, but was unable, during the several days he remained in Rome, to approach the Servant of God, so he went to another confessor, from whom, through shame, as usual, he concealed his sins. Having received absolution, and therefore having loaded himself with a new sacrilege, he started back for his native town. But the Divine mercy, not wishing to abandon him, filled him with such sharp remorse that he could

find neither rest nor peace. It seemed to him that he heard a voice telling him continually to return to Rome and confess to St. Leonard. For the second time he started on his journey, and reached the capital in the month of August of the year above mentioned. He went to the Convent of St. Bonaventure, and having asked for the Servant of God, knelt at his feet, and said to him: "Father, I am the greatest sinner in this world!" and then, with many tears and tokens of contrition, he made a general confession, recounting all the evil doings of his life. St. Leonard embraced him with great charity and tenderness, and encouraged him to trust in the mercy of God. The Holy Man was edified by the man's disposition, which, in order to make his confession, had prompted him to walk to and from his home twice, in all having walked two thousand miles. The Saint admired, in this more than all else, the goodness of the Lord, and, having untied his fetters, sent him back home so rejoiced that, unable to hide his joy within himself, this man afterwards narrated the special grace God had vouchsafed to him.

The other case was that of a Prussian heretic, who, having heard in his own country of the wonders wrought by St. Leonard, touched by the Divine grace, resolved that he, too, would go to Rome in order to see and listen to this Apostolic Man. He heard him, in fact, and then, having had an interview with him, manifested to him his intention of embracing the Catholic Religion. At the same time he entertained doubts about the primacy of the Roman Pontiff and the Invocation of the Saints, on account of which he could not fully make up his mind. Our Saint so clearly removed these doubts that the man, being convinced, detested his errors, and a few days later abjured them into the hands of the Cardinal Vicar, and then, being led by the Saint to the feet of the Pope, was granted the privilege of gaining plenary indulgence monthly, by going to confession and communion, and was assigned for his support two giulj (Roman coins of those days) daily.

As the close of the *Anno Santo* was near at hand, the Sovereign Pontiff ordered St. Leonard to preach a *Triduum*, in the form of a mission, in the Church of St. Andrea della Valle, the better to confirm the people in the piety and devotion previously con-

ceived and manifested in the course of that year. This *Triduum* was begun with the attendance of the Pope himself, who wished to give the Benediction with the Adorable Sacrament, and a great many Cardinals also assisted at it. As to the attendance of other people, it was so great that, as that spacious church could not contain them all, a large multitude was compelled to stay in the piazza. Everywhere nothing could be noticed but weeping, lamentations and contrition. Thus did this Evangelical Laborer terminate his work during the Holy Year, with so much satisfaction to the Sovereign Pontiff that, loving him tenderly, he would not permit him to go elsewhere, as he desired, but ordered him to remain in Rome and continue to come to the Vatican every Sunday afternoon, to converse with him about things concerning the salvation of souls and the welfare of the Church But, later on, the Holy Father had to grant him leave to depart, to give the missions in Lucca and other places, as we will presently relate.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

St. Leonard again gives the Missions in Lucca and in several places of the Diocese of Bologna, whence he returns to Rome, and, shortly after having reached his Retreat of St. Bonaventure, passes away to the Lord.

THE civil authorities of Lucca had, during the Holy Year, sent pressing solicitations to the Pontiff to allow St. Leonard once again to come to their city. The Pontiff was kind enough to deprive himself of his company, and accorded him permission to go there and preach the penance. Hence, he began to prepare for the journey ; but, before undertaking it, he determined to complete the good work instituted by him, with the approbation of Pope Benedict XIV, viz., the *Via Crucis* erected in the Coliseum (a place sanctified by the blood of many martyrs). The Pope had also given him permission to institute

a congregation of devout persons, under the title of the "Lovers of Jesus and Mary," who were to visit, in procession, the Stations of the Cross erected in said place, and to exhort other people to practice often a devotion so useful, holy and pleasing to God. He had also caused a little book to be printed, dedicating it to the Holy Father, which contained the rules that were to be observed by said Brotherhood; and nothing was needed to complete the pious work but the blessing of the crosses, which is prescribed for such a devotion. He arranged the matter, and obtained leave to have this ceremony on the 27th of December, the day dedicated to St. John the Evangelist. It was performed by the Monsignor Vicegerent of Rome, Patriarch of Constantinople, His Holiness having been prevented from doing it himself, as he had wished and intended. On this occasion St. Leonard preached in the amphitheatre of the Coliseum, in which was gathered an immense multitude, exhorting all to the frequent practice of the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis*, explaining to them that, besides the gaining of a great many indulgences, they could easily accomplish a perfect reform in their lives by meditating on the Passion of our Lord, recounted in the fourteen Stations. It seemed from the beginning that the practice of such a devotion, for various reasons, could not last long; but experience has already removed all fear, for it is still practiced constantly by the Lovers of Jesus and Mary, on fixed days, and very many other persons of all conditions, God-fearing and well behaved, take part in it also. St. Leonard had decided to build an Oratory to gather in this Brotherhood, to the end that they would not disturb the peace of the Retreat Church, where their congregation had been established, but, being prevented from carrying out this wish by death, the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV himself, who knew of it, resolved to build it after the Holy Man's death. He therefore caused the Oratory to be erected at his expense, near the Church of the Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian, in Campo Vaccino; and, not satisfied with that, he also took additional measures for the good government of this congregation, appointing the Church of these illustrious Martyrs for the meetings of the women, and the above-named Oratory for the men's meetings, and naming the Guardian *pro*

tempore of St. Bonaventure's Convent Perpetual Director of the *Via Crucis* to be performed in the Coliseum.

The affair of the Stations of the Cross having thus been settled by St. Leonard in the manner above mentioned, and the Regents of Lucca having returned in the month of March, 1751, to plead with the Pope that they might once more have the Servant of God in their city, St. Leonard, hearing of it, began to arrange, in great haste, for his departure. He had gone, therefore, on the fourteenth day of April, to the Holy Father to receive the Papal Benediction and take his leave, when he heard His Holiness ordering him to make use of a carriage going and coming ; and, as he showed surprise at so unexpected an order, the Holy Father replied to him : "Go, and return in a carriage ; we expect you back in Rome next November." He began his journey on the day following, and in a few days reached Florence, where crowds of people ran to see him, including priests, regulars and nobles. They crowded around him in the public streets, some desiring to kiss his hand or his habit, others trying to cut a piece of his habit or cloak as a memento. It was no easy task to protect and rescue him under these circumstances. The archbishop of Florence and the bishop of Fiesole begged him to visit several monasteries of nuns ; and he, ever obedient, complied, to the very great satisfaction of the Religieuses. He was stopping at his own Convent of the Monte, but was greatly distracted by the constant stream of visitors of distinction, who insisted upon seeing and conversing with him, and, consequently, removed to the Solitude of the Incontro, founded by him, as has been said already, thirty-five years before, on a mountain. He remained there for a few days, enjoying perfect peace and tranquillity of spirit, and on the morning of the fifth day of May he set out for Lucca, in which city he was held in the highest esteem on account of his irreproachable and holy life, and because of the great amount of good he had accomplished on previous occasions for the souls of these people. He was received with the greatest veneration and universal rejoicing. During the mission given here the attendance even surpassed that of former ones held some years before in the same city. It was so large that, the vast Cathedral of St. Martin being insufficient to hold

the great concourse, it became necessary to preach in the piazza of San Michele in Foro. It happened during the first few days that the Servant of God, worn out by old age and weakened by his labors, fell into such debility of mind that he was altogether incapable of serious application, and was, therefore, compelled to omit some sermons; nevertheless, he soon recovered and continued his apostolic ministry, and concluded it with such a loud voice and such strength of spirit that he even preached the sermons he had omitted; and the audience, listening to him with wonder and compunction, could not help repenting and crying at the very sight of him.

From the city of Lucca he started to go to Camajore, and on the way passed through Viareggio, where he was asked to preach a sermon, and graciously consented to do so. He drew abundant fruit from it, such as the conversion of a man and woman who had been living a life of shame. The man for seventeen years had been living in sin with a servant maid whom he kept in his own house. Because of this infatuation, he mortally hated his wife, whose presence he could not even endure, and had compelled her to separate from him and live by herself with a son, who could no better than the mother tolerate such a scandal. By Divine disposition this servant went to hear the sermon of our Saint, and her heart was so pierced by his words that, surrendering to grace on the spot, she publicly and bitterly wept and detested her wicked life, resolving to change it at once. Not satisfied with this, she returned home after the sermon, and made such a fervent exhortation to her master that, thunder-struck and touched, he, in turn, by the Divine grace, bade the servant to depart. He recalled his wife and son, and begged their pardon, to the amazement and joy of the whole town. Everybody thanked the Lord that, by the means of a single sermon of His own minister, He had removed a scandal from the city, for which, in so many years, no remedy could be found. The wonder of the people increased still more when they saw that this man, three days after his conversion, died. and was called by Almighty God to His tribunal.

In Camajore, too, while he was giving the missions there, a few days later, people could admire another striking triumph

of God's grace, likewise, suddenly wrought by the power of His Servant's voice. In this town was a mother whose son had been killed nine years before. She refused to forgive his slayer, though urged by persons of quality and distinction to do so. Nay, she, together with another son, persisted more and more obstinately in her hatred, and would answer anyone who mentioned forgiveness to her that they might send there as many missionaries as they pleased, but she, with her son, would never grant it. In such a frame of mind, mother and son went to hear the sermon on "The Madonna," which St. Leonard always preached during his missions, and both of them were so touched and moved to repentance that, laying down all rancor on the spot, they offered, publicly, and of their own accord, forgiveness and peace to their enemy, in so solemn a manner as to give edification and joy to the whole town. These were some of the extraordinary and wonderful conversions which God wrought by means of His minister's preaching, not to mention those of innumerable other sinners, who, everywhere, at the sound of his voice were shaken out of the lethargy of their vices, detesting them publicly, and then reconciling themselves to God by the Sacramental Confession.

The Pope had commanded St. Leonard to begin his apostolic labors in the mountains of Bologna on the feast-day of St. Bartholomew. In order to be at those places in time, he preached the missions in Brancoli and in Gallicano, which were largely attended by the people from the States of Lucca, Florence and Modena, within whose boundaries these places are situated. The multitude was so immense that it became imperative to build, in the territory of Barga, two bridges on the Serchio, for the accommodation of the people, who, in crowds, amounting, at the last sermon, to as many as thirty thousand, rushed to hear him. In the mountains above mentioned he gave three missions, though in such pain that he sometimes swooned away on the platform, and was unable to finish the sermon. In one of these places he found many disorders, particularly in persons who, on account of their dignity, should have set a good example before the people, and who, instead, turning into ridicule all that the zealous missionary said, went even so far as to endeavor to prevent some people from going to confession to him or to any of his companions.

Neither exhortations, invectives, nor threats sufficed to restrain this impudence, which God permitted in order the more to enrich the crown of His Servant, for these tools of the devil continued as they had been doing, and remained in their obstinacy and pertinacity. This was not the case, however, with the great majority of the people and many of the ecclesiastics; for these, assisting steadily at the sermons and the sacred functions, drew from them that fruit of which they gave evident tokens in their compunction and amendment of life. During these missions St. Leonard said many times to his companions that they were the last ones; and to Brother Diego of Florence, who, for the space of twenty years, had accompanied him in his apostolic ministry, he, at times, was wont to say that he wanted to preach a sermon to him. It was also remarked that, instead of studying the sermons, as he used to, he always kept in his hands the Resolutions, which he had made in the year 1717, as has been said elsewhere. When he applied himself to these, reading them and examining them with the greatest attention possible, his companions would tell him to put them aside for another time, and to study his sermons, but he replied: "No, these I need just now!" These and other unusual actions that were noticed in him gave just reason of fear that his death was near, and that he had already received intimation of it. In fact, answering a letter, from the mountain of Barbarolo, on the 29th of October, he wrote these precise words to Monsignor Belmonte: "If it shall please the Most High that I reach Rome, I think your old-time wishes may be gratified; but the bark is old and cannot navigate much longer."

When the month of November arrived, in which the Pope had ordered him to return to Rome, to which city he recalled him by a very kind letter written to him in the same month, he made up his mind to leave and begin his journey to that place. But he first went to Ferrara, called there by the archbishop, Cardinal Crescenzi, who wished to see him again and confer with him. From Ferrara he returned to Bologna, whence, by way of Loreto, he started on his journey on the 15th of November.

He arrived at Loreto on the 20th of this month, where Monsignor Stella, the governor of the place, received him with

demonstrations of the highest esteem, and earnestly begged him to take up his lodgings in his place ; but the humble Servant of God, who, during his whole lifetime, had always kept his resolution to stop, in his journeys, at the convents of his Order, wherever they might be, in order to show obedience to the respective local Superiors, thanked the prelate, but went to the hospice of the Minor Observants, where he slept that night. On the following morning he celebrated Mass in the Santa Cappella, offering it up for the Sovereign Pontiff, according to the understanding he had had the evening previous with Monsignor the Governor ; and after having assisted at another Mass in the same chapel he departed for Tolentino, where he arrived in the evening at about the twenty-fourth hour.(1) Here, too, he lodged in the Convent of the Minor Observants, and, that evening, manifested a joyousness, so unusual and so great, that his companion, ignorant of its cause, wondered at it. When leaving Tolentino, where the mountains were covered with snow, he suffered, the next morning, so intensely from the cold that he lost his color entirely and looked exactly like a corpse. Notwithstanding this, as soon as he reached Ponte della Trave, he resolved to celebrate the Holy Mass, afterwards partaking of a small piece of bread, and then pursued his journey as far as Case Nuove, where he arrived in the evening, one and a half hours after dark. Here, while warming himself at the fire, he was overtaken by a serious faintness ; but to his companion, who noticed it, and who told him that he had a high fever, he placidly answered : "I don't know." Then he began to recite his Divine Office, after which, taking a light collation, he went to bed to rest himself. But the cough soon assailed him, and he spent the whole night in such unrest that, at eight o'clock, he begged his companion to light the fire for him, as he could no longer lie in bed. His companion asked him how he felt, and, being answered twice : "I feel ill !" he concluded that the Holy Man's condition must be very serious indeed ; for, in all the weak spells and hardships which he had experienced in his journeys for the space of twenty-six years, he had never

(1) Old way of counting the hours, which it was lately tried to reintroduce in Italy.—*Note of the Translator.*

been heard to say that he felt bad, but had endured everything with indifference and without uttering a word of complaint. On the morning of the following day they started for Foligno, where, likewise, he wished to celebrate the Mass. When his companion begged him not to do it on that morning, because he could not stand on his feet, St. Leonard, with great feeling, answered him : "Brother, a Mass is worth more than all the treasures of the world ;" and he celebrated it, but could hardly finish it, his limbs and his voice shaking through weakness. In going, on the following day, from Foligno to Spoleto, the driver mistook the road and found himself in a narrow passage, through which the calash could not pass, therefore the Man of God was compelled to cross a ditch, full of water and mud, on foot. Consequently, he arrived at Spoleto depressed and fatigued, and in such a plight that it seemed he would expire then and there. Notwithstanding this, he wished to recite the Divine Office, with the assistance, however, of two Religious. He was asked, with pressing solicitation, to remain here ; but, excusing himself by saying that His Holiness had ordered him to be in Rome in the month of November, he continued his journey in the direction of Civita Castellana, from which place, very early on the morning of the 26th, he set out for Rome.

During this last day of his painful and fatiguing journey he showed more than ever the burning desire he felt to arrive quickly at his Convent of St. Bonaventure ; asking first at Rignano how far it was from that place, and then again at Castel Nuovo, where he rested a few hours, and as soon as he arrived, though with extreme difficulty, he finished the recitation of the Office of that day. The moment he perceived Prima Porta in the distance, he asked Brother Diego how much longer it took to reach Pontemolle, and then said to him : "Brother, during these last missions on the mountains of Bologna, I often told you that I wanted to talk to you and preach a sermon to you. Now this is what I wished to tell you, that, as soon as we shall arrive at our Convent of St. Bonaventure, you shall deliver into the hands of the Father Guardian this little box containing my sermons ; you will tell him that I willingly and with all my heart deprive myself of them and will have nothing more to do

with them ; but, at the same time, I exhort him to give them to Religious who are adapted to this holy ministry for the salvation of souls ; and, should he fail to do so, he will have to render a very strict account to God for his neglect. You will also consign to the same Father Guardian the keys of the boxes in which are kept the Madonna, the Crucifix and all other things used in the missions, of which, Brother, I beg you willingly to deprive yourself." Brother Diego replied to this, that he, with a good heart, deprived himself of all these things, and the Saint then added : "I am pleased that you are detached from everything, and that you are simply bent on doing God's will." After this he continued to exhort him to observe the holy vows, to endeavor always to practice the holy virtues, and never to lose the peace ; for by so doing he would be beloved by God and the Religious. In conclusion he told him to persevere in the Retreat, and ended by saying : "I know already that I am to die shortly." "No," replied Brother Diego, seeking to cheer him up ; but the Saint continued : "From the signs I have I know that I am near the end. But doubt not, Brother Diego, that I will always pray to God for you ; for I always wished you well." After a short lapse of time he emitted a deep sigh, raised himself up in the calash, and said : "Brother, I thank God with all my heart for granting me the grace I so much wished for, to die in the holy Retreat." Immediately on entering the gates of Rome, he told the same companion : "Brother, begin the *Te Deum*, and I will answer you ;" which was done, and, while reciting this hymn, they arrived at the Convent of St. Bonaventure, after the twenty-fourth hour of the twenty-sixth day of November.

With difficulty he was taken down from the calash, being so feeble that his pulse could no longer be felt, and was carried to the infirmary, where, having immediately made his confession, he asked for the Holy Viaticum, which was brought to him about one hour after his arrival, all the Religious assembling. As soon as Jesus in the Sacrament appeared, the Saint addressed Him in such an affectionate and touching colloquy, and recited the Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity with so much vigor and devotion, that it penetrated the hearts of all those present, and caused them to burst into sweet tears of tenderness. After hav-

ing been left alone with God for some time in devout recollection, the physician came and the Saint begged him not to order him to eat meat, as he was solicitous to keep, till the last breath, that abstinence which he had kept for so many years. The physician found that his pulse had almost ceased to beat, and ordered, in the meantime, a restorative. Upon receiving it from the infirmarian the Saint thanked him for his charity, and said: "Oh! if as much would be done for the soul as is done for the body!" And after drinking it, he added: "Brother, words fail me to thank God for the grace He grants me, to die among my Brethren, the Religious of the Retreat." Shortly after he had arrived he wanted to write to His Holiness concerning his obedience, and for that purpose asked for paper and ink; but his confessor deemed it better not to allow him to do it, saying that they would rather notify Monsignor Belmonte, domestic prelate and confidant of the Pope, in order that he might inform the latter of his arrival. In fact this prelate called at four o'clock, and, expressing his regret at seeing the good friar in that condition, added that this news would much grieve the Holy Father. The Servant of God rejoiced at the sight of the prelate, and, with a smiling countenance, answered him: "God's will be done, and may whatever is for His glory be accomplished! Please humbly lay at the feet of His Holiness the last sentiments of my filial obedience." The prelate replied: "Father Leonard, you are in the hands of God, who, I hope, will give you the possession of His eternal mercies; and when this comes to pass fail not to pray to God for His Holiness and for me." To which St. Leonard answered: "I will do it willingly, and may it be for the glory of God." After this the prelate immediately left. Then the Saint, wishing to remain more recollected, dismissed the Religious, telling them to go and take a rest; which they did, the infirmarian alone remaining to assist in case of need. While he was outside the door, which was half-shut, he heard, to his delight, that the sick Saint was emitting fervent acts of love of God and invoking the most holy Virgin, speaking to her as if she were present. Peeping in and going to the bedside, he saw the Holy Man, with face inflamed, and, touching his body, felt it burning like fire. Then Extreme Unction was at once

administered to him, which he received with a devotion that everyone may imagine; and shortly afterwards, in his perfect senses, as if overtaken by a placid sleep, and without making any motion, the great and holy Apostolic Missionary of the Eighteenth Century fell asleep in the Lord.

St. Leonard went to receive the reward of his many labors undertaken for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, at the sixth hour of the night, between Friday and Saturday, November 26th and 27th, in the year 1751, aged seventy-four years eleven months and six days; fifty-three years of which he had spent in Religion, and forty-four constantly in the missions. In the morning early, according to the order previously received, notice of the death was sent to the Holy Father, who, on hearing that Father Leonard had died, said, with great feeling: "We have lost much here on earth, but we have gained a protector in heaven;" while tears could be seen dropping from his eyes through emotion. As soon as the news of St. Leonard's death spread throughout the city, so many people ran to the Church and Convent of St. Bonaventure that it was deemed proper not to expose the body to the public gaze, in order to avoid any possible disorder that the rush of the populace and of persons of all conditions might engender. The body was exposed only during the funeral and the High Requiem Mass, inside the railing of the main altar; and among those who assisted at the sacred function were Monsignor Reali, Monsignor Belmonte and Monsignor Giovardi, who, when the obsequies were over, lifted the bier with the body and carried it to the infirmary, to a room where it remained all the following day. In the meantime the throng of people increased constantly, and the whole street leading to the Retreat of St. Bonaventure was so crowded that it became necessary to station at the doors of the convent and also of the church twelve soldiers, who had to remain there several days, because the crowd was continually growing greater. Towards evening three Most Eminent Cardinals, viz., Guadagni, the Pope's Vicar, Bardi and Monti made their way there; and so did Monsignor de Rossi, Vicegerent, and other eminent personages, both lay and ecclesiastic, together with regulars of various Orders, all of whom, gazing at that sacred body, unanimously

repeated that a great Servant of God had died—one of those to whom the Redeemer says, in His Gospel (St. Matt. xi, 28): "Come to Me, all you that labor and are burdened (for My love), and I will refresh you."

Some princesses, among them being the Duchesses Strozzi, Cesarini, di Carpineto and others, wishing, in their devotion, to see him before he would be buried, went the same evening to the above-named church, accompanied by many persons of rank, and begged earnestly for the wished-for opportunity. One hour after dark, then, the church being shut, although the soldiers were still stationed there, because even at night the throng was very great, the body was carried back from the infirmary to the church, and there these distinguished personages gazed at it for some time, to their great satisfaction. They then departed, and on the following morning, before daylight, it was buried in the following manner: With the assistance of Monsignor Giovardi, who, for this purpose, had slept in the convent that night, and the notary, who made a public document thereof, in the presence of many Religious and of the Provincial, who happened to be on his visitation tour, the body of St. Leonard, first juridically recognized, and being found flexible in all its limbs, as if alive, was placed in a box, which was sealed with Spanish wax, and then deposited in a separate tomb in front of the chapel or altar of the Father St. Francis, and covered with a stone, on which the following inscription was carved:

D. O. M.
HIC JACET
F. LEONARDVS A PORTV-MAVRITIO
MISSION. APOST. ORDIN. MIN. REFORM.
SACRI RECESSVS S. BONAV. DE VRBE
VIXIT ANN. LXXV. OBIIT XXVI. NOVEMB.
MDCCLI.

(Here lies Brother Leonard of Port Maurice, Apostolic Missionary of the Order of the Reformed Friars Minor of the Holy Retreat of St. Bonaventure in the city. He lived seventy-five years; and died November 26th, 1751.)

Such was the Life, here briefly told, of St. Leonard, a Man truly Apostolic, nay, the Apostle of our Century, the glory of

the Most Serene Republic of Genova and of his birthplace, the honor of Italy, the bright ornament of the Church and a new light of the Franciscan Order. It would necessitate the writing of many large volumes simply to mention the good he wrought by his voice and example—in removing and uprooting vices and causing virtues to flourish in all—in converting even the most obdurate and hardened sinners—in establishing piety and the Divine worship in numberless places which he influenced by his presence, his sermons and his missions, traveling everywhere, regardless of season, fatigue and hardship. His memory still remains and shall for centuries remain blessed among the people, who everywhere still loudly recount his wonders and his merits, which will be made manifest even better by Part Second of the present history, wherein, with the same conciseness, we will speak, as best we can, of his virtues and of those gifts with which God so abundantly enriched him.

PART SECOND.

CHAPTER FIRST.

Of the Faith of St. Leonard.

WE are made acceptable to God and the Saints by the virtues we practice with the assistance of the Divine grace, and the more we practice these the nearer, ascending through them, as if by steps, we approach to God; it therefore follows that, in speaking of such a man, for St. Leonard is acknowledged to be just and a friend of God, it is necessary that we should mention some of those many Virtues, through the heroic practice of which we behold his arrival even at the honor of the Altar. Though many of these virtues may have become known from what has already been said of him, because they shine in all his works and apostolic undertakings so brightly, that they dazzle the eyes even of those who do not desire to see them; nevertheless, to the greater glory of the God of the Virtues and of His Servant, who, by His help, practiced them, and for the greater edification of all who shall read this book, we will discourse of them—at least, of the noblest and grandest ones—with greater precision and clearness. But, as some of these have their proper seat in the heart, known to God alone, and may, consequently, be called interior virtues, we will continue to expose them to view, gathering them from what he did and said when animated and moved by the interior virtue, of which his words and actions were like flashes of bright lightning, giving outward tokens and indubitable proofs of his thoughts. Putting together, therefore, those sayings and works, which are separated and scattered in Part First, and adding others, which are proofs of those virtues we shall speak of in their respective chapters, we will now begin with the Theological ones. We shall speak first of his Faith, which is the beginning

and the foundation of our justification, the root and soul of all other virtues. We speak of this virtue that it may, at once, be understood, in a measure, from the greatness of his faith, how much he advanced in the acquisition and practice of the others, how acceptable he was to God and how united with Him, Faith being just the virtue by which, according to St. Paul, we please God and approach nearer to Him. As this is one of the interior virtues, the same Apostle saying that "*corde creditur*"—"with the heart we believe" (Rom. x, 10), we shall gradually discover it, as has been said, in the results by which it manifested itself, particularly in his devotion towards the Divine Mysteries and the Saints of heaven, for this devotion can be truly called the first-born and legitimate child of Faith. Experience itself teaches us that a Christian is more devout and pious in proportion to the faith rooted in him; and that if this fails, as, alas! happens sometimes, devotion also fails in direct ratio. Nay, if it is true that Faith is alive and works through charity, and, according to St. James, manifests itself through deeds, then by simply giving a passing glance at a few particular actions of St. Leonard and reflecting upon some of his sayings, we will clearly see how strong and great was his Faith.

Even from his childhood St. Leonard showed his Faith by all those acts of piety related before in their proper places, and which will be again referred to in the chapter following; and by instructing his youthful companions in the principal mysteries of the same faith, even preaching to them from some elevated spot, as if in presage of the Apostolic Ministry. He could not have persevered with so much strength and such great zeal in these labors, overwhelmed, as he was, by fatigue and suffering, without a very strong and sturdy Faith. This he showed in Rome itself by teaching, whilst yet a young layman, the Christian Doctrine in the churches and by drawing people to the Catechism classes and the sermons. After he became a Religious he manifested it several times to his confrères, expressing to them, in familiar discourses, the great desire he cherished in his breast, of going to preach among the infidels, and of giving his blood and his very life for the Catholic Faith; which desire burned in him as long as he lived, for he often regretted, even in the last days of his

life, that he had not been found worthy, as he said, to die for Jesus Christ. He was apt to break out into these plaints with greater force especially when he heard that a persecution had started in China (where he had desired to go when young, and had obtained leave to do so), and that some missionaries had suffered martyrdom. How burning this desire of his was, and, consequently, how great his Faith, cannot be better expressed than by the very words by which he manifested it publicly in the sermon he preached on this Virtue. He said: "If it is allowable for a son to imitate, to some extent, his father; I offer myself, too, in the manner in which my Father St. Francis offered himself before the Grand Sultan, when, in order to authenticate his Holy Faith, he made a proposition that they should build a big fire, and declared that he would enter it, provided that the Barbarian and his followers received the Holy Baptism. Yes; I offer myself, also, to do the same," he continued, "kindle in that piazza a large fire, yes, kindle it, and obtain for me the permission of my Superiors that I may escape any blame of temerity, and be sure that, if there be among you anyone vacillating as to the truth of the Faith, I, to convince him, will, without any difficulty whatever, throw myself among those flames to prove the truth of Faith which is wholly divine. Ah, pray! who will grant me to give my life, blood and all for Faith so worthy of it?"

What more is wanted? From the eighth resolution made by him in the Solitude of the Incontro, it appears that he had taken Faith for the guide of his actions, and revived it at the beginning of all his works, therefore this Servant of God neither walked nor acted except by the light and guide of Faith. Animated by a lively Faith, regarding God as always present to himself everywhere, he saw all things in God and directed them all to Him, seeking nothing but God, either within himself or outwardly. With the acts of Faith which he made before all his actions, as he declares in the Resolutions, and especially before the more important ones, he acquired, every day, new and greater fervor to work for the glory of that God, in whom he firmly believed, and who was the goal of all his desires, affections and actions. By means of this virtue, as he used to say, he formed unto himself a mental solitude, which he styled the "Country of

Faith," where, believing all supernatural truths, and forgetful of all created and material things, he aspired, especially in his prayers, to nothing else but God and heavenly objects. In this Land of Faith he wholly applied himself to courting his most beautiful God, and, entertaining himself with Him alone, endeavored, as far as lay in his power, to transform self into Him. Even outside of the time of prayer he contemplated in creatures the goodness of God, which he discovered in them by the light of Faith; nay, regarding, in them, God Himself, he admired His greatness and encouraged himself to reach Him by the exercise of all the other virtues, of which, as has already been said, Faith is the beginning, foundation and root. From this habit it came to pass that, having God and His Divine Attributes constantly before his spiritual eyes, He often appeared to be out of this material world and even out of his own senses; so that, when he was met in the convent by the Religious, or even when out in the world, by acquaintances of quality and distinction, he seemed utterly oblivious of their presence, and did not return their salutation nor answer any question which they might put to him. He went on his way, all absorbed in God and with his thoughts concentrated upon Him, at Whom, through his Faith, he constantly looked and Whom he ever had before his eyes. Hence, firmly believing all the truths revealed by God and proposed to our belief by the Church, he protested that he believed them all as firmly as if he had actually seen them with the eyes of his body; nay, that he was even more sure of them, than if he had actually seen them, because they were revealed by the First Infallible Truth.

He tried also to bring others to this Faith in the Divine Presence, which was so lively in him, saying, as can be seen in his Manual of a Religieuse, that this was a very easy matter, it being sufficient to believe that God is always at our side, as Faith teaches us, and to look at Him with the eyes of Faith, in order to be convinced of it, even in the darkness in which we walk. Nay, he wished that Faith should be kept strong and pure among Christians, and that it should not even be exposed to the danger of vacillation or of obscurity, and thus be lost; therefore, after he returned from Corsica to Genova, while preaching in the

Metropolitan Church, he recommended that the citizens enroll themselves in the pious association of "Our Lady of Succor," instituted in order to keep an armed navy on the sea against the pirates, who, often landing, captured and led into slavery not a few of the faithful, thus placing them in danger of losing the Faith. In order to move their minds to accomplish so pious a work, he spoke for six consecutive days with so much zeal and fervor that the news of it reached even the Turks, who plotted to capture him, as he himself stated in one of his letters, in which he gives us, at the same time, a new proof of the burning desire he cherished in his heart, of dying for the Faith: "In Tunis," writes he in this letter, "the Turks have come to know that I urge arming against them; thus they say that Brother Leonard wages war against them, and they seek this Brother Leonard, and if they find him they will quickly impale him; as they would do this *in odium Fidei* (out of hatred for the Faith), I wish it *ex corde* (from my heart)."

But, if it did not please God that His faithful Servant should go among barbarians and give his life, as he wished, for the Catholic Faith, nevertheless he caused the zeal and love he bore it to be shown in the conversion to the Catholic Faith of a number of infidels whom he met with in Christian countries. Out of many facts I might here quote, I will limit myself to speak only of the following ones: While he was giving the missions in Leghorn, a young Turk, who, luckily for him, happened to be in that harbor, went to hear him. He understood very little of the language of the missionary, still, the Divine grace working in him, he went to see the Holy Man, and explained to him the desire he had conceived of becoming a Christian. The Servant of God received him with joy and very great kindness, encouraged him to carry out his holy purpose, and, after having well instructed him in the truths of our Holy Faith, took the young man with him to Florence, where, to the unspeakable joy of his heart, he had him baptized. With the same kindness and joy he also embraced a young Hebrew in Viterbo, who was moved by God while listening to one of his sermons, and had resolved to embrace the Christian Faith as soon as he returned to Rome, but the moment he spoke with the Servant of God

he felt his words aroused in him such ardor that, without waiting, he went under instructions, learning all that was necessary in a few days, and wished to receive baptism in the cathedral. Our Saint manifested equal zeal in regard to two Hebrew girls, converting them to the Holy Catholic Faith by quite different means. One of them had been taken to the House of the Catechumens in Rome, where some others of her relatives had become Christians, but she had obstinately refused to abandon Judaism. The Saint converted her by applying to her forehead the image of the most blessed Virgin, which he always carried with him. This she acknowledged to the Saint later on, after she had become a Religieuse, telling him that he had no sooner touched her with that sacred image, than she felt a sudden change of heart that moved her to become a Christian, which, in fact, she had done, offering herself, afterwards, to God by solemn vows ; with which, she added, she was well pleased, and had not words sufficient to thank him for such a great blessing. The other one had received baptism under pretense of becoming a Christian, but without any real belief, and shortly afterwards also entered a monastery, received the habit and made her profession in that same spirit, apparently a Christian, but in reality a Jewess. Our Saint arrived at this monastery, and began to hear the nuns, one by one, and when he reached this one, who had only the habit of a nun, he exhorted her with much gentleness and charity sincerely to open her conscience to him. Then that wretched one, her heart being touched by God, confessed to him her miserable state, and, being moved by his fervid words, begged him for the opportune remedy. He, animated by his zeal to conquer that soul for the Catholic Church, shook her out of her darkness, and enlightened her with the light of our Holy Faith, in the mysteries of which, with great zeal and tenderness, he very thoroughly instructed her ; after that, he took the proper means to remedy her grave offense.

He showed this same zeal for the Faith and also his desire to restore wanderers to its fold, even more in the following instance : A sailor, native of a town where, some years previously, St. Leonard had given the missions, had become a prey to the wicked desires of his heart, depraved by the passions,

and, the better to satisfy them, resolved to go to Geneva, where, as soon as he arrived, he forgot God, eternity and himself. But God, most merciful, followed him with His mercies, pierced his heart at times with the sharpest remorse, and at the same time He caused him to hear an interior voice that constantly told him to go to confession to Father Leonard, who would restore him to the communion of the faithful, absolved and consoled. But, as the corruption of the heart quickly causes the darkening of the intellect, he was deaf to remorse and blind to the flashes of light wherewith God wished to enlighten him, so he left Geneva and went over to the Turkish countries, changing his belief with the country. Once there, though he plunged into the mire of a thousand filthy sins, the merciful Lord continued to pierce him with remorse, stimulate him to go to Rome and make his confession to Father Leonard. The wretch succumbed, at last, to the voice of Grace, and, after a long voyage, reached the city of Rome, where he at once went to the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, knelt at the feet of the Man of God, recounted the sins of his wicked life, and the errors against the Catholic Faith into which he had fallen, first among the Protestants, and then among the Mohammedans. With the greatest charity the good Father embraced this prodigal son, and after having duly catechised him, in order to purge him of all the false maxims with which he was imbued, with the necessary faculties, he reconciled him with God and the Church ; and, as the man was poor, he procured for him sufficient assistance and sent him happy to his native place. In one word, the Faith of St. Leonard, being a live one, and of that kind that worketh through charity, accomplished this, viz., that as he had always wished to convert the infidels even far away, therefore he embraced and led to Jesus Christ those he happened to meet with in Christian lands. This same Faith of his animated his zeal to procure the salvation of sinners, an infinite number of whom he converted to God during his missions, in which he could not have persevered with so much ardor and fervor till the very last days of his life, without a Faith exceedingly strong and robust, being overwhelmed, as he was, by sufferings and hardships.

CHAPTER SECOND.

Devotion of St. Leonard towards the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar.

AS devotion is born of Faith, and is a token and a very clear proof of it, because the latter stimulates us to honor even with exterior acts of worship and religion the Eternal Truths which we believe, therefore the firmness and vigor of St. Leonard's faith will be made more apparent when we enumerate some of those acts of worship which he constantly practiced. The Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist is called *par excellence* "*Mysterium Fidei*"—"the Mystery of the Faith," and it is precisely the Faith concerning this Sacrament which distinguishes the true believers (children of the Catholic Church) from the new sectaries, therefore we will speak first of the devotion of our Saint towards so ineffable a Mystery. Without going back to the first years of his life, when, as is well known, he assisted at Mass, remained long in the churches before Jesus in the Sacrament, and approached, when old enough, to receive Him; it will suffice to mention that having, in one of his Resolutions, constituted this Divine Sacrament the centre and object of all his affections, he adored Him constantly by internal and external acts, and endeavored. as far as it in him lay, to make others adore Him likewise.

As soon as he arrived in any place, the first visit he paid was to the church, to which he repaired immediately, there to adore the Most August Sacrament. He celebrated the Holy Mass daily with so much devotion that he edified all those present; he prepared himself for it in such a manner that he confessed even twice a day; and all he did from the hour of Compline till the Mass of the following day, he offered as his intention in preparation for so awe-inspiring a sacrifice. In offering it he was very exact as to all the ceremonies prescribed by the Church, and, communicating every morning as if by Viaticum, according to the resolution previously made, he excited in his heart acts of lively Faith, Love, Contrition and ardent desire to be wholly

transformed into Jesus during the time of Communion. He also made these acts while preparing to celebrate Mass, and then renewed them in making his thanksgiving after having finished, saying that the chief requisite for the preparation and the thanksgiving was to possess a heart pure and humble, which, enlightened by a lively Faith, moves it to emit many acts of interior humility, of offering, of praise, of love and of contrition. Every morning he assisted at as many Masses as he could and his occupations allowed; and in the act of offering which he made, he formed the intention to hear and offer up to the Lord all the Masses that, on that day, were offered up in the whole world. He used to call the Holy Mass the "Sun of Christendom;" the "Soul of the Faith;" the "Centre of the Catholic Religion, towards which all the Rites, and all the Ceremonies, and all the Sacraments thereof, tend;" and the "Compendium of all the good and beautiful that is found in the Church of God." This was the Faith he had in so great a Sacrament, and proportionate thereto was his devotion towards the Same, which he particularly manifested in celebrating Mass; for, besides what has already been said, he never went to the Altar without being girded with the cilicium, and without having first offered the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father thirty-three times, supplicating Him to vouchsafe that his soul, by virtue of that Sacrifice, might be pure and clean of every stain.

In putting on the sacred vestments in order to go to the Altar, he accompanied every one of those actions with such fervid sentiments of Faith and of piety, that he showed even outwardly and sensibly the interior ardor and the flame he inclosed in his breast. In going to the Altar he imagined himself going to Calvary, and seeing with the eyes of the Faith the Most Holy Trinity that, courted by the angels and the saints, was there to accept the Sacrifice he was about to offer, he went forth with so much devotion and modesty that, to any beholder, he seemed a man raised above himself and totally absorbed in his Lord. And he appeared to be such, also, when at the Altar celebrating Mass, which, to prevent distractions and to fix his mind on God, he was wont to divide into five parts, viz., preparation, instruction, oblation, communion and thanksgiving. In the first part,

lasting from the beginning of the Mass to the *Introit*, he made interior acts of contrition and humility, acknowledging himself unworthy to offer so great a Sacrifice. In the second, extending from the *Introit* to the end of the *Credo*, he gave the greatest attention to the meaning of the words he was saying, in order to catch those inspirations that God might condescend to grant him. In the third, embracing the time between the Offertory and Holy Communion, he endeavored to keep vividly present before his mind those four ends for which the Divine Sacrifice must be offered up, viz., to give praise and glory to God, to satisfy His justice for the sins committed, to thank Him for the many benefits received, and to beg Him for more blessings. In the last part, viz., from Communion till the end of Mass, he accompanied all the prayers with lively thanksgivings to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, now within his breast, adoring Him most profoundly and making repeated acts of love towards Him. If he was, sometimes, told that he should not be so long in celebrating Mass, he answered quickly: "Do you not know that my greatest consolation is that of celebrating the Holy Mass, and one of my greatest pains and regrets is to see some priests celebrating in a great hurry? If we all had a lively Faith we would never wish to depart from the Altar." In fact, that such was his Faith, and that consequently he found his delight in offering up the Divine Son to the Eternal Father, he clearly exhibited in the act of Consecration, during which his countenance was suffused with color; and in the act of Communion, when he appeared full of joy, as if he had spoken with a confidential and intimate friend; in fact, during the whole time of Mass, he appeared as though in an ecstasy, and all absorbed in the Lord present in the Blessed Sacrament.

But the devotion of St. Leonard towards the Most Holy Sacrament did not end in adoring Him with all those acts we have spoken of; but it also extended to influencing others to adore Him as well. In all his missions he inculcated with the greatest fervor that, when the Holy Viaticum was carried to the sick, IT should be accompanied with the greatest possible reverence and the greatest number of lights. The result of these exhortations could be seen in a great many places; for, where,

before these missions, the Holy Viaticum had been accompanied by only a few persons, after them there was a decorous retinue with numerous lights. This happened more particularly at Ancona, where he said, in his sermons, among other things, that the many foreigners of different nationalities and religions, flocking to that seaport, would be edified if they would see that Catholics bore their God in the Blessed Sacrament with pomp and decorum. This appeal carried so much force that the citizens, moved by it, afterwards accompanied the Blessed Sacrament in great numbers and with many torches, the latter numbering, sometimes, five hundred; this, joined to the devotion and reverence of the people, caused in the spectators at once edification and emotion. In a town of the Sabina the people were so dreadfully negligent in accompanying the Most Holy Viaticum to the sick, that they were ashamed to carry the poles of the canopy, and it was often necessary to wait a long time, till some poor peasants would come forward to perform this duty. The devout missionary spoke at length on this point, and so exerted himself to persuade those people and induce them to fulfill this holy office, which, on such occasion, is rendered to the true God, that when the first opportunity presented itself to bear Holy Communion to a sick man, the whole town ran to accompany the Blessed Sacrament, the most prominent people carrying the canopy, which they continued doing from that time on.

In Minerbio, Diocese of Bologna, when the Holy Viaticum was to be carried to a poor sick man, as we have already related, who lived in a miserable shanty half a mile from the church, he induced all the people to accompany, with lights, the Divine Sacrament, and among them two Most Eminent Cardinals, who happened to be there. The same thing occurred in Occhiobello, Diocese of Ferrara, and elsewhere; St. Leonard persuading even bishops and prominent persons to render a like act of homage to the Lord in the Sacrament; to which end he exhorted also the people to hear many Masses and to attend them with all possible reverence.

But the devotion of our Saint towards the Blessed Sacrament went even farther, for he caused money to be gathered, which was to be employed in purchasing suitable and precious

vessels in which to preserve it. In Ascoli two hundred dollars had been collected; therefore, after deducting what was necessary for candles burned during the various services, the remainder was used to purchase five ciboriums for those churches which stood most in need of them. In Castel San Pietro of Bologna, where he found a very small monstrance, which seemed to him unbecoming the Majesty of God in the Sacrament, he used his influence to have a sufficient sum collected during the time of the mission, with which to secure a splendid one, and was successful in his efforts. As he felt also an ardent wish that every hour in the day and night there should be some one engaged in adoring this Most August Mystery of our Faith, he endeavored to establish more firmly the Congregation of Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament, which he had found already erected in Rome in the Church of the Rotonda. He himself promulgated the indulgences granted to the members of this pious association by the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV; gave his name to it as a Brother; and afterwards propagated it with so much zeal that, before he died, he had the consolation of seeing it introduced and well established in one hundred and thirty places in which he had preached, and had also succeeded in having it established even among the people of Mexico.

In one word, from his early years up to his death, our Saint was a most devout worshipper of Jesus in the Sacrament, and manifested everywhere this devotion, the offspring of his Faith. He adored Him in every place with interior and exterior acts, and exerted himself to influence others to adore Him at all times. Of his Faith and devotion he finally gave the most evident tokens during his last illness, when, having arrived in Rome half-dead already, he was lying on his little bed, exhausted and almost expiring, yet at the sight of the Most August Sacrament, carried to him as the Viaticum, shortly before he died, he gathered up great strength and energy, and broke forth into Acts of Faith, Hope and Charity. He held a loving colloquy, and spoke with so much fervor and love that he moved all to tears of tenderness.

CHAPTER THIRD.

Devotion of St. Leonard to the Passion and to the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

THE devotion of St. Leonard toward the Passion of our Divine Redeemer was very marked; for, besides meditating constantly upon it and carrying it always engraved in his heart, he spared no labor to excite also in others the memory of it, and to encourage them to have it, as far as possible, always present to their minds: "This is the way," he wrote with his own hand, "to sanctify the Catholic world and free it from the tyrannical dominion of Satan, viz., to make every effort to have the faithful think often of the Passion of our Redeemer, and carry it imprinted in their hearts; and to attain this end I would willingly contribute all my blood, my breath and my life." Well did he show, both in his familiar talks and in his sermons, that he carried the Crucifix engraved in his heart; for, while he was recommending with very great warmth frequent meditation on His Sorrows and Death, it could be perceived from his face and words that he himself was fully penetrated and pierced by compassion for those sufferings. He generally began his prayer with some text of the Passion, fixing his mind upon some of the sufferings endured by our Lord, particularly during His Crucifixion. He distributed in proper order the points of the Passion upon which he intended to meditate during the Divine Office, as is evidenced from his fifth Resolution, and thus his meditation upon the Passion became uninterrupted, as has already been said; for he spent, in this way, all the hours of the day and also part of the night. Besides this, he visited daily the Stations of the *Via Crucis* with so much devotion and affection that he melted into tears while meditating upon the sufferings of Jesus expressed by the same. He also carried steadily upon his breast a cross with five sharp iron nails, which hourly presented the sorrows of his Lord to his mind; wherefore he was in the habit of saying, as is found noted in his own handwriting: "I will carry Jesus Crucified engraved in

my imagination and in the midst of my heart; often withdrawing myself to His feet to weep for my sins." On all Fridays in the year he chewed bitter wormwood or herbs, in memory of the gall which our Redeemer was given to drink on the cross; and on the Fridays of March he always fasted on bread and water. He often had these words on his lips: "May the Passion of my good Jesus be always in my heart!" and he used to kiss with affection all the crosses he could reach.

One of his principal cares was that of establishing, in all the places in which he preached, the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis;* hence, he erected it in villages and towns and even in the most prominent cities, in each of which he placed the Fourteen Stations representing the journey made by Jesus from the Prætorium to Calvary. They were either painted or in *bas-relief*, the more easily to move the souls of the faithful to meditate on the Passion of the beloved Redeemer. Having obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff the faculty to extend this holy and useful devotion, he increased its practice and spread it so that, through his endeavors, it was also introduced into the monasteries of the Sacred Virgins and in many places where, till then, it was utterly unknown. In Rome itself, with the approval of the great Pontiff Benedict XIV, he caused to be erected in the Coliseum the fourteen little chapels, which are still to be seen, for this devout exercise, and he instituted, as already mentioned elsewhere, the Congregation of the Lovers of Jesus and Mary, who were to visit processionally these Stations, and also to try to influence other people to do likewise. Wherever he gave the missions he inculcated the practice of this holy exercise, explaining to the people the great spiritual profit to be derived from it. He himself composed and had printed a little booklet of Meditations on the *Via Crucis*, very tender and devout, which are, to this day, used by many in making the Stations of the Cross.(1) When closing the missions he recommended to the people to frequent this devotion, and among the principal advices he was

(1) In Italy, in most of the books containing it, this devotion is headed: "*Via Crucis* of the Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice," as though he were the REAL FOUNDER of this beautiful devotion, to-day well-nigh universal.—*Note of the Translator.*

wont to leave to the confessors, one was, to impose on their penitents to visit the *Via Crucis*, assuring all that there was nothing which moved a man more, if a sinner, to amend his life, and if just, nothing which strengthened him more, to persevere in justice, than the Meditation on the Passion of Jesus Christ. He also warmly recommended to everybody the wearing of a small Crucifix on the breast, in order to have ever present the memory of Him who suffered so much for us, and also to have One nearby to whom to have recourse in the temptations and the assaults of the devil. He endeavored, likewise, wherever he preached, to introduce the custom of having the bell rung every Friday, at the twenty-first hour, so that all the people, hearing it, would kneel down, and recite three *Our Fathers* and three *Hail Marys*, in honor of the suffering Jesus, who agonized three hours for us upon the cross and expired at that hour. This beautiful custom, introduced by him, is still continued in a number of places, particularly in Rome, where, in many churches, the notice is given by the bell for this object and also to pray to God, as the Saint added, for the conversion of the most hardened and obstinate sinners.

And as the Name of "Jesus" precisely signifies "Saviour," thus perfectly befitting the Son of God made man to save and redeem us by His Passion and most painful Death, St. Leonard, enamored of Jesus Crucified, venerated also with singular devotion His Most Holy Name, and did all in his power to obtain that IT might be loved and reverenced by the people. He also carried IT painted upon a standard, which he styled his Banner, whereby he gathered the soldiers of the Crucifix and waged war against hell, imitating in this the two great Saints of his Franciscan Order, Bernardino of Siena and Giovanni of Capistrano, the first of whom was the inventor of that August Monogram, and the second its defender; and who converted innumerable sinners and wrought great wonders by the virtue of this Most Holy Name, which they preached and whose Monogram they carried in every place they went. St. Leonard also preached a special sermon upon it, in which he recommended its cult, and explained its advantages with so much tenderness and affection as to move to tears of devotion all his hearers. In all the places where he

made the missions he introduced the custom among the faithful to salute one another by saying: "Praised be Jesus Christ;" which custom, truly Christian, is still adhered to in many places. From his extraordinary yearning that this Most Holy Name should be venerated by all, came the very great grief he felt at hearing some Christians impiously profane IT by perjuries and blasphemies. Hence, he inveighed with most burning zeal against such profaners, and would have wished (so he said) that his words should be like so many darts to pierce the hearts of those wicked ones, in order to move all to love and reverence so sweet, so august and so holy a Name. To attain this end he also employed certain means which had a happy result. Having gone to give the missions at Arpino, he discovered that, among other vices, blasphemy predominated greatly there; for which reason, after having striven by his sermons to extirpate this detestable and truly infernal vice, one day he spoke from the platform to all the children, telling them, nay, strongly begging them that, if, in the future, they should hear any person outraging the Most Holy Name of Jesus, they should gather around him, crying out repeatedly, with a loud voice: "Jesus Christ be praised!" The Lord blessed the industry of His Servant; for, after the missions, it happened that some certain prominent persons, addicted to this vice, would fall into it occasionally, and would at once be surrounded by a crowd of boys crying as above. Being ashamed, and to prevent themselves from the like shame in the future, they gave up the wicked custom altogether. He also labored much in order to have the Monogram of this Most Holy Name placed over the gates of towns and the doors of dwellings, feeling sure that, having it under their eyes, the faithful would try to render it due worship and reverence, or, at least, they would more easily abstain from outraging it. God vouchsafed to show how much this pleased Him, by clear and sensible tokens; as happened in Porto Ferrajo (Tuscany), where a Christian was prevented from placing that August Sign over the door of his own house by a Jew, who had rented the store underneath it. The Christian then, unable to fasten it where he wished, and where the pious missionary had suggested, placed it as best he could over two windows of the house. Shortly after this the

Jew's store caught fire, and, though everything in it was reduced to ashes, nothing being saved, still it was remarked that the flames, as soon as they reached the place where the Most Holy Name of Jesus was fastened, turned back and downward, leaving the house of the Christian wholly uninjured, to the wonderment of all, who acknowledged the prodigy as due to the admirable virtue of the Divine Name. In one word, St. Leonard honored and also influenced others to honor the August Name of the Redeemer, because, enlightened as he was by Faith, he well knew its power, its merit and its excellence. By the same light, knowing as far as was possible the dignity and the work of the Redeemer Himself, he professed towards Him a most tender devotion, and it seemed impossible to him that anyone who knew Him and believed in Him would not love Him. He felt certain that serious reflection upon the immense benefits that have come to us from Him would be sufficient to excite love and gratitude towards Him. He strove, therefore, with the most forcible expressions to place under everybody's eyes, and to make known to everyone, how many reasons there are why our Divine Redeemer is entitled to our gratitude and devotion. Sometimes he used to say that if from all the noblest thoughts one thought only could be formed, even this would be inadequate to understand fully the greatness of Jesus Christ, which entirely surpasses every human conception.

Hence it was that, being taught and learned in the realm of the Faith, to which he often withdrew himself, he described Him in his familiar conversations and in his sermons as being of a beauty so excellent and supreme that (he added) if, in Paradise, there should be nothing else to admire except such beauty, so pure, so holy and so dear, as is that of Jesus Christ, it would, nevertheless, be a most beautiful Paradise. To some he described Him as having a heart so loving and tender that He welcomes, like a father, every sinner, even the blackest, provided that, converted and repentant, he turns to Him and humbly begs forgiveness of Him. And to others still he represented Him as having His hands full of graces and favors to pour upon us; whence he exclaimed from the platform: "From our Blessed Jesus come to us so many adorable mysteries, so many Holy Sacra-

ments, so many Divine Writings, preachings, graces, virtues infused, the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the actual graces, the good thoughts, the holy affections, the inspirations and a thousand other treasures; for everything that in any manner may help our salvation comes to us from the Chief of the predestined, who is Jesus Christ." Then he would go on, with greater fervor: "My most beloved God, either take away my life, or give me Thy love. And as on this earth I possess nothing good, except this rag of a tongue, this will I always employ till my last breath, to praise and bless my Lord Jesus Christ." At other times, in conclusion, unable to restrain the flame that was blazing in his breast, he thus expressed his tender and burning devotion, the offspring of his Faith, towards the Divine Redeemer: "Ah! my Jesus! my God! who will grant me that all the members of my body become so many tongues to make Thee known and loved by the whole world?" And, in fact, he exhorted all whom he met in the streets to praise the Redeemer with that salutation wherewith he first saluted them: "Jesus Christ be praised!"

CHAPTER FOURTH.

Devotion of St. Leonard towards the Blessed Virgin and other Saints.

THE devotion of our Saint toward the most holy Virgin may be said to have been born with him and to have increased with years, ever becoming greater and tenderer. We have seen in Part First that he, whilst yet a child, spent much of his time at home in building little altars in her name, to present his homage to her by devout prayers, inviting also his youthful companions to do the same, often going with them, even barefooted, to visit her Image called *dei Piani*, placed in a church about two miles distant from Port Maurice. But, in order to understand how much he advanced in this devotion towards her, it is sufficient to read the sixteenth, the seventeenth, the eighteenth, the nineteenth and the fifty-second Resolutions,

in the last one of which he said: "I like to have a most tender devotion towards the most holy Virgin, and I protest that I have placed the affair of my eternal salvation in her hands, loving her with the tenderness of affection, with the affection of a son for his dear Mother, and wishing that all should love her and pay her queenly homage." Hence, calling her always by this title of his dear Mother, he bore her a most special love and purposed, as it is found registered in his own handwriting, to make every effort to be all her own both in time and in eternity: "I intend, not only to dedicate all my heart to her, but also to enkindle this beautiful fire of her devotion in all the souls, promulgating her glories everywhere, often speaking of her, thinking constantly about her, and fostering all the pious practices that have been instituted in her honor." In fact, he recited every day the seven-decade Rosary, which originated with and is recited by the Franciscan Order; and when unable to do it, being prevented by various occupations, he ejaculated seven most tender acts, taking delight in the seven joys that the Sacred Heart of Mary felt during her mortal career. Likewise, every day he made twelve profound bows in honor of the twelve prerogatives granted to Mary by the Most Holy Trinity, venerating the Virgin as his Lady, and rejoicing with her, because she was created immaculate and spotless and was chosen to be the worthy Mother of God. At every bow he asked her to obtain for him angelic purity of body and heart, a most profound humility, and the conversion of sinners, protesting, at the same time, that he loved her with all his heart, and intended to love her till his last breath as his Mother and his Lady. Every time the clock struck the hours he recited a *Hail Mary*, and felt a delight that the great Virgin had been created without the stain of original sin, and had been chosen as the Mother of the Lord, giving thanks to Him for having granted such beautiful prerogatives to Mary. At the three customary ringings of the Angelus bell, he recited on his knees the prayers prescribed, and after the first *Hail Mary* he renewed the vow of poverty in the hands of Jesus, as the Holy Infant; after the second, the vow of obedience in the hands of Mary; and after the third, that of chastity in the hands of St. Joseph.

On Saturday, all the year around, he kept a rigorous fast in honor of Mary, and on the eve of all her feasts, preparing to celebrate them with singular devotion, he would only partake of some bread and water. Before those of the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity and the Assumption he made a Novena, and before the others a Triduum, spending this time, with greater fervor, in austerities, prayers and various acts of virtue, to prepare his soul to receive through Mary, on the day of her feast, new graces and favors. He always carried over his heart a tiny wooden box, on one side of which was the picture of Mary, and on the other that of St. Vincent Ferreri, and pressing it, from time to time, to his heart, he would consecrate to the Blessed Mother all his affections. Whilst he was at his desk studying he always kept this image before his eyes, and often, kissing her feet, begged her to assist him, declaring that he was her servant. Proclaiming that Mary was his pious Benefactress, he used to declare that he intended wholly to devote himself to praising and serving her; hence, he thus spoke from the platform and thus left it written: "As to myself, when I begin to consider the many graces received from the most holy Mary, do you know what I seem to myself to be? Give me leave to proclaim it here publicly: I seem to be one of those churches of a miraculous Madonna, in which you see all the walls covered with votive tablets, all bearing just this writing: 'For grace received through Mary.' Thus it seems to me that I am covered entirely with these words: 'For grace received through Mary.' This soundness of mind, this Divine office in which I am employed, this holy habit that I wear: 'By the grace of Mary.' Every good thought, every good will, every good sentiment of my heart: 'By the grace of Mary.' Read on, read; I am written all around, on my soul and on my body, within and without: 'By the grace of Mary.' On this heart of mine it is written: 'By the grace of Mary.' On this tongue of mine you will find written: 'For grace received through Mary.' Blessed therefore be without end my pious Benefactress. Yes; I will sing forever the mercies of Mary; and, if I am saved, it will be through my great Lady, Mary." From acknowledging and proclaiming himself so greatly obliged to the most holy Virgin Mary, not only was born, and grew every day more

in him, that great desire to please her, by loving her and offering to her all those homages we have enumerated and which his fervent spirit suggested to him ; but likewise that of promoting the same devotion and affection in others.

In private discourses and in his sermons he would be inflamed with holy zeal to persuade all to be devout followers of Mary, and to give her all their heart. Besides recommending this from the platform with great and peculiar energy, pleading with all to have recourse to her in their own needs, he also exhorted people of means to make, in their wills, some bequests to be distributed among the poor, on condition that they should recite the most holy Rosary every evening. In every mission he preached the sermon on "The Madonna," first tenderly thought of by him, and afterwards delivered with so much zeal and fervor that, upon hearing it, even the most hardened hearts were softened and gave themselves up, wholly conquered. Hence, it happened that the conversions which followed this sermon were innumerable ; therefore, St. Leonard was wont to say : "The impression which the dread of Hell, of the Judgment and other terrible sermons fail to make, is made by the sermon on my dear Mother Mary." In one word, so great and extraordinary was the fervor with which he delivered this sermon, that he gave clearly to understand what devotion was burning in his heart towards the Queen of Heaven. To comprehend this to some extent I will transcribe here faithfully the very words with which he was wont to express himself from the platform : "I wish to die," he used to say, "in order to live with Mary. Ah ! beloved people, I do not say this simply out of ceremony, but I say it from my heart, and with all my soul. I wish to die in order to live with the most holy Mary. Ah ! dear Mother, receive me into your arms. Behold a poor son, who wishes to come to you, most loving Mother. And you, dearly beloved, all of you recite in a low voice a *Hail Mary* for me, and obtain me this grace that I may drop dead now, yes, now on this platform, provided it may be granted to me that I may go and live with Mary. By the grace of God, my conscience, at present, does not reproach me with any sin, and I would hope to go to the holy Paradise and be admitted to see my great Lady and true Mother. But, if I am unworthy of so

great a boon, at least let me give vent to my feelings, by saying: 'I wish to die! I wish to die! Yes, I wish to die, in order that I may live with the most holy Mary.'" He uttered these words with so much emotion, and so much force and energy, that everybody could easily see and be convinced that they were coming from his very heart.

From this he went on to exhort the people to be devout towards the Mother of God, and would teach them what her true clients should do to honor her every year, every month, every week, every day, every hour and at all times; and, after having taught them various ways of paying her homage, he would conclude by saying that the devotion most acceptable to Mary, and without which all that could be said and done in her honor would be of little or no avail, was to flee from sin and the occasion of committing it. Hence, he added, one truly devout to the Blessed Virgin, upon first sighting temptation or danger of sin, must at once say within himself: "This thing displeases my great Lady Mary; far be it from me that I do it and cause her that displeasure. I will never do it for eternity!" At other times he used to say in preaching: "Embrace with fervor the true devotion to Mary, and behold you are all saved!" And he added immediately: "But who is the true, devout follower of Mary?" answering at once: "It is he who is the true enemy of mortal sin." Finally, to undeceive the false devotees (of whom even in our own time the Catholic world has plenty), who, while plunging into all sorts of sins, believe that they do something acceptable to the Virgin, and that they are truly devoted to her because they offer some homage to her, either by saying the Rosary or visiting some of her images, he went on to say: "This is to pretend that the Mother of God should be the protectress not of the sinners, but of the very sins themselves;" ending afterwards by saying that, "in order to be numbered among the truly devoted of so great a Lady, it is necessary to combine conversion to God and devotion to Mary." We would never finish if we should here relate everything he said and did to promote and firmly root among the faithful devotion towards the Virgin Mother, and all he did to honor her himself by means of every possible act of veneration and wor-

ship; hence, I will not again relate the great eagerness with which he tried to have the image of Mary, which he carried with him in his missions, to be revered. He exposed it in public and carried it in procession with almost numberless lights, and with all of the greater tokens of homage and honor that the condition of the place permitted.

As a person who loves and reveres the Master and His Mother reveres and loves also His Servants, so St. Leonard, who loved and venerated with so great a devotion the Divine Redeemer and His most holy Mother, loved also and reverenced the Saints of heaven, who are the faithful Servants of Jesus Christ, and, as such, most devoted to Mary. He was very devout to his Guardian Angel, whom, as appears from his eighteenth Resolution, he reverently saluted at every hour the clock struck, after venerating the Virgin, thanking him for the assistance received from him during the hour just ended, and begging of him to assist him during the hour that was commencing. He made also these acts towards Mary and his Guardian Angel at other times and during the night-hours, when he could not hear the clock strike. He had chosen for the particular patrons of his missions his Seraphic Father St. Francis, St. Vincent Ferreri and St. Anthony of Padua, and, besides invoking them and reciting their anthems every time he was about to begin his apostolic ministry, he also venerated them every day with particular devotion: "I intend (says he in the Introduction to his Resolutions) to imitate as near as I possibly can, particularly the virtues of my Seraphic Father St. Francis, asking his paternal benediction that I may put into practice all my resolutions." He also professed a singular devotion to other Saints (male and female); honoring them and having recourse in his needs to their intercession and assistance. In the evening, before retiring to rest, he recommended himself to all the Saints, invoking them one by one in the Litanies which he had made in their honor, and which can be seen in his thirty-ninth Resolution; after which, as he says in the same, in order to die strengthened by the Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion, he recited one *Our Father* and one *Hail Mary* to Saint Barbara, Virgin and Martyr, asking her to intercede for him to obtain this grace. He then invoked the

help of his Guardian Angel, that he might assist him during that night, for he always had recourse to him, speaking with him, asking his counsel in his doubts and his assistance before preaching, praying or other spiritual exercises.—This was the devotion of St. Leonard, originated and begotten of that Faith with which he believed all the Christian truths, with such firmness as if he had seen them with his own eyes, nay, more firmly still; because he held all the Mysteries of the Catholic Religion to be as true (he used to say) as these Mysteries are before God Himself.

CHAPTER FIFTH.

The Firm Hope of St. Leonard.

IT must be said that the Hope of St. Leonard, to attain all that God has promised us by His infallible word, must have been very great, if, during his whole life, he wished for nothing but heavenly things, and expected to be provided by God alone with those earthly goods which are needed for our sustenance. Very firm, indeed, was his Hope of reaching the eternal beatitude, which is the object of this theological virtue, and in order to attain this reward, that is, God Himself, he labored so constantly, as long as he lived, regardless of hardships, fatigue and sufferings. "I purpose," says he, in the sixty-first Resolution, "to exercise Hope with as great confidence as if I were most sure of my eternal salvation, nay, as if I were already in Paradise. This confidence is grounded on those four unshakable foundations—hope, the grace and the glory, and all the things which are not opposed to the eternal salvation and the glory of God; because God is just, faithful, merciful and omnipotent, viz., because He has the power, He rules, He has promised and must reward, on account of the price our Divine Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ has paid for us, and because of the good works I trust that I will perform with His Divine assistance." These were the bases and the supports of his Hope; hence, he acted

and directed everything to the acquiring of the eternal salvation, of Paradise, having previously said: "Hoping that, by assisting the souls of others, God will save my own soul, I make a resolution never to draw back whenever it shall be a question of giving spiritual aid to some soul, but to be ready to work for it at all hours." And so he did, going everywhere, when sent for or when requested to conduct missions and convert sinners, without regard to the length of journeys, rain, snow or poor roads, heat or cold, or any other hardship or danger, as we have already seen in Part First.

In order to make his Hope more firm and unshaken he endeavored to form such a high ideal of God's mercy that, resting on the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, he hoped to be saved without even touching Purgatory, though he was disposed to accept it willingly (as appears from the ninth Resolution), nay, with thanksgiving, even up to the day of Judgment, if such were the will of God. And he added: "Nor can this extraordinary Hope hurt me; nay, it will be useful to me; because, not excluding a holy filial fear, it redounds to the honor of God and makes me more diligent in working; for, in order to obtain this holy end, I purpose to avoid, not only grievous sins, but venial ones as well and the slightest imperfections." He often repeated the ejaculation: "My Jesus, mercy!" making use of it to obtain all the graces, and particularly that of final perseverance and that of loving God more and more; which were his intentions whenever he said it.

So great was the Hope he had in God of obtaining salvation, that he not only urged his heart to have confidence in the Divine mercy, but also encouraged others to trust fully in it and to believe that, notwithstanding the light faults into which we often fall, God, looking on one side at our frailty, and on the other at the merits of Jesus Christ, will accept the meritorious works we offer to Him in atonement of our debts, the intercessions of the Saints to whom we pray, the indulgences properly applied, and other similar good works, and therefore we have reason to hope that we may go at once to Paradise. Such was the confidence he manifested to a brother-Religious, by whom he had been asked whether he hoped to enter Paradise immediately after

dying, without even touching Purgatory. "Yes, I do," answered the Saint; "I hope to be made worthy of it if, while I constantly try not to fall into grievous faults, and not even, deliberately, into venial ones, God will also grant me the grace to accept, in satisfaction for the light faults inadvertently committed, and for all others, those few deeds I perform and the labors I endure that I may merit, for myself, in some measure, the kind consideration of His Divine mercy." Oftentimes, whilst conversing with his brother-Religious, turning his eyes to heaven, full of trust and confidence in God, he would exclaim: "Ah! when will this so tardy death come? When will these bonds that tie me be rent asunder? When will that lucky day arise, in which it shall be given to me to be able to see my God face to face?" He measured his Hope by the Divine arguments, and could not bear to see them limited and restricted by those of human prudence; hence, in order to establish a certain soul securely in confidence in God, he thus wrote to her: "Act the poor little beggar before God's tribunal, ask as an impoverished person that even needs the strength to breathe; and, in order to move Him to grant your request, make use, as a motive, of His own goodness, of your own misery; offer to Him the merits of His Son, and remind Him of His promises." From this, one can easily infer how well grounded he was in the virtue of Hope, and how this virtue was well founded upon true and solid reasoning. By placing these thoughts clearly before a Religieuse, one time, begging her seriously to ponder them, as he did, and thus throw them into the face of the devil, who was tempting her to despair, he freed her from the extremely troublesome distress and restored interior peace to her heart. He did the same thing while preaching and hearing confessions, inspiring all not to lose their hope, and, no matter how grievous their sins were, to hope in God and be sure that, by His assistance, they would obtain forgiveness and eternal salvation.

Not only did he look to God for the eternal rewards, but also, as has been already mentioned, for those things necessary to this life; for this reason he expected, with firm confidence, heavenly help, even in the hardest cases, never losing courage in the least. When he was about to sail, for the purpose of giving

missions, to the Island of Corsica, a region then in great disorder and full of factions, which naturally would cause one to have some fear, he wrote to a priest thus: "I start for Corsica; the dangers are great; but I feel I have within me the heart of a Lion;" and as a Lion indeed he acted against vice in the midst of many dangers, as has been related in the proper place. When the Retreat of San Francesco del Monte was founded in Florence, the Grand Duke Cosimo III contributed with royal liberality all that was needed for the maintenance of the Religious, without their being obliged to beg for alms; but, when our Saint had been made Guardian of this place, he thanked that prince for the generosity shown the friars up to that time, and requested him to let them subsist on alms begged from door to door, for, otherwise, it seemed to him like wanting in the confidence which he felt in Divine Providence, and which, he declared to the same Grand Duke, was the very pillar of his Retreat. In order to live by this capital, trusting solely in God, among the other regulations to be kept during his missions, he also laid down this one: "In traveling to the place of the missions no victuals shall be carried on the journey, neither condiment, nor anything else, except when traveling by river or by sea. No one will be permitted to come and eat with us, neither shall we go and eat in anybody's house, not even that of a prelate, or any other prominent person, no matter what his condition, by whom we might be invited. Neither shall we accept anything, but the mere necessaries for our support; and whatever may be left over shall be distributed among the poor. No requests shall be made during the missions; nay, nothing shall be asked of anybody, not even an article of devotion." And he kept this rule so strictly that, during the many years in which he made the missions, and in the numerous journeys he was forced to undertake, he never departed in the least from this rule. In fact, during the forty-four years of his apostolic ministry in various places and provinces, he refused to accept either dinners or gifts, which were often offered to him by many people. Although often compelled to walk from morning till evening through desert and even wild places, he never allowed any provisions to be carried, not even a slice of bread to keep up strength along the journey.

Sometimes benefactors, in the places from which he departed, wished to give him food to nourish himself during his travels, but he used to tell them very kindly that he had a Lord, who had pledged Himself to provide for him, and that never, in so many years, had He failed to keep His word, neither would He fail to do so in the future, and this was his God, trusting in Whom, he was sure to be provided by Him in all his needs. Once arrived at the place of the missions, he would never allow any one person, in particular, to support him, except during the last missions he made in Rome, during which he was obliged to obey ; for he always wished that his maintenance should come from the daily Providence, confident, nay certain, that while he and his companions were promoting God's glory and working for the salvation of souls, He would see to it that they should be provided with the necessary sustenance, if they placed their trust in Him. The Lord did not fail to strengthen in divers instances the confidence of His Servant, supplying his needs both in the convent and on his journeys, even in an extraordinary and unlooked-for manner.

In the year 1716, shortly after his renunciation of the alms offered to him by the Grand Duke, which he, as has been stated, sent to the Religious of the Convent del Monte, there happened to be, particularly in Tuscany, a great dearth of oil, the olive trees having been much damaged by the cold of the preceding years. As there was but a small quantity of oil in the convent, kept in a jar, the Brother, not knowing how to supply their actual needs, went to the Superior and placed before him the situation in which they found themselves, viz., that if they used what little oil there was left, in a few days they would have none at all. St. Leonard, who was then the Superior, without in the least troubling himself at this information, calmly answered the Brother as follows : "Trust in God, and doubt not but that He will provide." In the meantime what little oil they had was diminishing daily, and was nearing the end altogether ; consequently the Brother returned to notify the Father Guardian, and to make him realize the great difficulty, in that time of scarcity, of obtaining more oil, either by begging or otherwise. The Saint repeated with the same calm and tranquillity : "Trust in

God, Brother ; and doubt not but that He will provide for us ;" adding, though, in order to encourage him to hope in God : "Does it seem possible to you, Brother, that, after we have left everything for the love of God, and have renounced the assistance which the Grand Duke offered to us, because of the trust we placed in the Divine Providence, this will now fail us?" What he foretold came true ; for two benefactors, at the same time, without being asked, sent eight barrels of oil to the convent.

Another similar instance of Providential assistance was experienced in the same place, on the occasion when all the Altar linen of that church (of which there were many pieces) had been stolen, and no small outlay was needed to replace them. The Religious who had charge of these articles, not knowing what to do in the matter, expressed his regret to St. Leonard, who answered him : "Brother, trust in God. We have a great and good Father ; He will provide for us in all our needs." And so it happened ; for, no sooner did the news of the theft reach the Marquise Ferroni, than she supplied the needs of the Religious, making all the Altar cloths, not only for that occasion, but also taking upon herself the care of providing the sacristy, as long as she lived, with all the linen necessary. On another occasion, too, our Saint felt the effects of the Divine goodness, receiving from God, in Whom he trusted, timely assistance for his convents. He also experienced this on the many journeys he undertook, as we have said, without any provisions, and during which he always received what was necessary to sustain him ; nay, many times he even refused to accept the invitations of various persons who wished to entertain him at their table. If he arrived at a town at night, he did not always find someone willing to give him shelter at first (God permitting this, in order to afford His Servant an occasion of merit), but soon somebody would come to his rescue, receive him kindly into his home, and supply him with everything necessary.

From this and other occurrences he took more courage to trust in God and to have recourse to Him, without troubling himself in any instance that might confront him, no matter how adverse, awaiting the opportune remedy from Him, and in each case receiving it. This is shown in the following instance which

we will relate, omitting many others which could be given. In the year 1749, a fire started in the pantry of the Convent of St. Bonaventure, in Rome; and the flames assumed such proportion in a short time that there was a great conflagration, which threatened to destroy the whole convent. The pantry was located under the cells of the Religious, who, it being night-time, were then asleep, so that nobody had noticed the fire until it had so far advanced that the tongues of flame shot out of the windows in a frightful manner, and wreathed the roof and the very pinnacles of the building. The confusion was very great and all were struck with alarm; but St. Leonard, with his customary confidence in God, went directly to the sacristy, and, putting on his surplice and stole, took the Blessed Sacrament out of the tabernacle and blessed the fire with IT. This done, whilst the other Religious, with a large number of lay people who had gathered, were endeavoring to extinguish the fire, he began devoutly to perform the *Via Crucis*, and, afterwards, retiring to his cell, scourged himself severely for a long time. Then he knelt down to pray, and continued doing so until the fire was put out and all danger ceased. Such was the firm hope of St. Leonard in God; for, strongly believing Him to be just, faithful, all-powerful and merciful, he felt confident, beyond a doubt, that, by doing right, with the help of Divine grace and through the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, our most loving Redeemer, he would obtain in the life to come the eternal reward of Paradise, and in this life all those temporal aids which are not opposed to the attainment of our final end. He strongly endeavored to excite others, especially sinners and those in distress, to conceive the same hope, encouraging the former to hope for forgiveness, if they asked God for this blessing, at the same time detesting their sins and promising to amend their lives; after which they would feel a certainty of obtaining eternal salvation. He urged the sorrowful ones to expect from the same God consolation and strength in their tribulations and necessities. From this Hope, which in him had grown to be firm trust, was born in his heart the detachment from all earthly and perishable things, and his contentment with the simplest and most scanty necessaries, as we shall see in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIXTH.

The Poverty of St. Leonard.

AMONG the virtues practiced by our Saint in a very heroic degree, one certainly was that of poverty. He had promised to practice this virtue by a solemn vow, and also determined, in the forty-fifth Resolution, to keep it in such a manner as to be, as closely as possible, the follower of his Seraphic Father and his first companions. He resolved to practice their maxims and to love inconveniences and privations which poverty brings with it, as he said, encouraging himself to do this by the magnitude of the reward, in imitation of the same Father St. Francis, to whom, because of the reward he expected for it, every pain was delight. Our Saint knew that, one day, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul had told St. Francis that all those friars, who should have observed a perfect poverty till death, would be enrolled among the number of the blessed; and, therefore, he loved this virtue of poverty so tenderly that he protested that he loved it, not only for the reward, but also for the pleasure which it gives to the heart of Jesus, who wished to be born poor, live poor, and die poor and naked upon a cross. He called this virtue the distinguishing mark of his Order, adding that, as man is no longer man if we take from him his distinctive mark, so, also, if poverty be taken away from a Franciscan Religious, he is no longer of that Order. Hence he took great care to observe it faithfully; and though it was kept and practiced zealously and with great rigor in the Retreat, still this was not enough for him, and, not satisfied with the ordinary observance of this virtue, he strove to practice it with greater care and severity. In one of the written reminders (*ricordi*), which he always carried with him, this also is to be found: "I would like to be able to keep the holy poverty with the strictest rigor wherewith the Father St. Francis and his companions practiced it; and would to God I possessed enough ability, strength and assistance to introduce it most rigorously into all the convents." He divided poverty into three kinds, calling the first, "poverty of body," which con-

cerns temporal things; the second, "poverty of soul," which consists (said he) in checking all the affections, so as to be detached from everything in this world; and the third, "poverty of spirit," which one possesses when detached even from spiritual consolations and the very gifts of God.

As to temporal things, he observed poverty so exactly that he never had possession of anything; he simply had the use of the necessary things—poor, indeed—and he was prompt to give even that up at the order or even suggestion of the Superiors. It is attested by one who was familiar with him that he never noticed in him anything which in the least might offend the poverty he professed; but that he rather knew him always to be a strict and most rigorous observant of the same. One, among others, who heard his confessions for several years, bears the following testimony of him: "The love Father Leonard bore to holy poverty was so great that, had he not been prevented, he would have gone to extremes both in dressing and eating, and likewise in regard to his furniture, dwelling and everything else. For this reason he strove to suggest and implant this spirit of strict poverty in all the Religious; and he was more drawn to that place where its observance was more in evidence—the greater it was, the greater being the joy of his heart." He never wore a new habit, but always used one already worn by others, torn and frayed, which was patched for him; the more worn and patched it was, the greater his satisfaction in wearing it. One time only he made use of a new habit; that was in 1746, during which year he was giving the missions in the Dioceses of Bologna and Ravenna. The winter was very cold and he was advanced in years, therefore, the Father Guardian of the Convent of St. Bonaventure, in Rome, pitying him, sent the habit to him with the order that, without replying a word, he should put it on. He obeyed promptly; but, in order that poverty should triumph, he had it all covered with old pieces. He had but one and the same habit for every season, which would indeed cover him in winter and also in wild, mountainous regions, but would not shelter him from the rigors of the weather, so that sometimes one could see him shaking from head to foot. He seldom wore the under-tunic, though it was allowed according to the rule of

St. Francis, only wearing it during the missions, to preserve his voice. During his journeys he made use of some pieces of woolen cloth, which he never used at other times, except when compelled by obedience. He exhorted his Religious with great fervor to be poor in dress, oftentimes adding that it was a thing unbecoming and monstrous to wish to make a vain show of one's self under a poor and humble habit, and that, as a rich garment is an ornament to a worldly lord, so a patched-up habit is a decoration to a poor Religious, follower of Jesus Christ. Whilst he was Guardian in the Retreat of Florence he introduced the custom of patching the new habits, that poverty might show itself in them, exhorting his Brethren not only by his voice, but also by his example, dressing in the manner already described, girding himself with a thick, rough rope, and walking everywhere and at all times absolutely barefooted; therefore, at the mere sight of him, one could at once recognize a true lover of poverty and a preacher, by the very habit he wore, of the contempt of the world and of its vanities.

Neither was his poverty shown any less in his meals and the food of which he partook; for, besides the scant allowance, of which something will be said when we shall speak of his temperance, he always saw to it that his food should be in keeping with the very strict poverty he professed. He partook only of herbs, pulse and fruits, and of these sparingly, even in scarce measure; and if, at times, he was advised to eat something more, that he might be better able to endure fatigue, he would answer: "One who makes profession of poverty must feel the effects thereof, and to fully satisfy one's needs, without suffering any inconvenience, is not in keeping with the condition of being poor." At other times he answered: "On account of the vow of poverty we have made, the benefactors give us alms, of which we shall have to render a very strict account, because we eat the blood of the poor, and, the more we eat, the greater will be the debt we shall have to pay to God." Whenever he noticed that in the convent there was dearth even of the necessaries of life, and that sometimes one thing or another was wanting on the table, he showed an extraordinary gladness, and, full of mirth, would say: "To-day we have fared as real Friars Minor."

For the love of poverty he refused, as has been said in the preceding chapter, the provisions that the Grand Duke of Tuscany wished to send to the Religious of the Retreat del Monte. On the many journeys he undertook during his long life, he not only would not provide anything to eat on the way, as has also been mentioned, but he would never even accept letters of introduction, offered to him by many persons, in order that he might get lodging here and there with some degree of comfort, saying that "he who is truly poor by profession, must beg for his lodging on his journeys." If, during the missions, he discovered that the soup (*minestra*) had been prepared with some delicacies, for instance, with meat-broth and not with oil, he at once stopped eating it, and said to his companions, who had done it because he was more fatigued and weaker than usual: "My Brothers, straw is enough for the little donkey, and he must not accustom himself to corn and oats." If a person offered him anything in the line of victuals, this was his answer: "I do not give a thought to such things. My only concern is to bring souls to God. As to my body, I leave its care to my companion." In one word, he was so detached from the things of this world that he did not give the least thought even to what seemed absolutely necessary to sustain his life.

In his cell he had but two boards for his bed, one coverlet, one chair and a table upon which to write; and during the nine years that he was Superior in Florence, he would not even have the latter, using, instead, a board nailed to the wall, and for a chair the projecting ends of the boards on which he slept. Hanging from the walls there were only two or three paper pictures and the Crucifix, which he carried on his breast during his journeys. He would not even keep in his care those few religious articles that Superiors generally present to their benefactors and give to those seeking alms of the convent, leaving this to be attended to by his Vicar; and, what is more astonishing, he never wished to have a personal use of those necessary articles, such as scissors, penknife, needle and the like; therefore, whenever he needed one of these things he would borrow it from others, and as soon as he was done with it would immediately return it. In his own cell, therefore, as has already been said,

there was only a little box containing his writings, his Breviary, the Rule, his eyeglasses, the cilicium, two disciplines, one small cross with sharp iron corners, which he wore on his bare body, and a small box with the paper images of the Immaculate Conception and St. Vincent Ferreri, which he made use of to bless the sick. These were all his riches and the furniture of his cell; for of all the other things—a few books, the images of the Crucifix and the Madonna, which he carried along and made use of in his apostolic ministry, he gave himself no thought, leaving all the care of these to the lay brother to whom, before he died, he recommended to give them all up in delivering the keys of the boxes to the Father Guardian. His love of poverty made him also desire to retire often to the poorest convents, such as that of the Solitudine dell'Incontro and that of St. Angelo of Montorio, and to find there his delight, making also, as we have already seen, his Spiritual Retreats in them. The same love of poverty stimulated him to be parsimonious in even the smallest things, as he well knew how much the moderate and restricted use of everything leads to the perfection of this virtue, and how much the Saints made of this. Hence, in writing even to persons of distinction, he used only as much paper as would suffice for the actual writing; and if occasionally admonished by his companion to write in folio or otherwise, to show his regard for the persons he addressed, he would reply by saying: "Poverty does not teach me thus; and let them not take this as a sign of little respect, if I do write to them according to the manner of the poor." For this reason he neither gave nor accepted any gift, no matter how trifling; hence, he is not known to have given a Rosary, or a little religious picture, because he never had any. Being urged by his companion, on some occasions, to accept certain religious objects, which were tendered to him: "Brother," he answered, "change the subject and speak to me no more of these things. I will not accept nor keep anything. I will observe the vow of poverty exactly."

Oftentimes, in the places where he was preaching, various presents were sent to him by different persons and even by the municipalities; but he, in order to keep the resolution he had made, would send them back, with his regards and thanks, refus-

ing to accept them. At the close of the missions in Ferrara, the archbishop, Monsignor Crispi, sent him a box filled with the most beautiful articles of devotion, in token of appreciation of his apostolic labors; but the Servant of God, without even opening it, sent it back by the same messenger to the prelate, thanking him for his kindness, and telling him his labors had been amply rewarded by the fruit they had obtained among the people, who had given very clear signs of repentance and reconciliation with God. The Vicar-General of Frascati, seeing the great fatigue our Saint endured in preaching mornings and evenings, sent him many candied fruits and confections, that he might strengthen his stomach and preserve his voice. As soon as the lover of poverty and enemy of all delicacies saw these things: "Send them back to the Lord Vicar (said he to the messenger), and tell him they are not in accordance with the poverty to which I am bound. My concern is to convert souls to God, and God will see that the strength of my stomach and the clearness of my voice are preserved, without my making use of such delicacies, which are not suitable for a poor man." Two days after he had opened the missions in Civita Castellana, in 1735, that very worthy bishop, Monsignor Tenderini, was attacked by a fierce malady, which reduced him to the point of death, though, for the good of the Church, God, afterwards, restored him to his health. St. Leonard attended him with the greatest diligence, celebrating Mass every morning in the Chapel of the Episcopal Palace, and giving him Holy Communion each time himself. On the day on which he was accustomed to preach the sermon on "The Madonna," the very devout bishop begged the missionary kindly to bring the sacred image to his room, in order that he might pay it that homage which his infirmity prevented him from offering it in public. The Saint condescended to comply with the bishop's request, carrying it himself to the bedside of the patient, who, after having venerated it with most tender devotion, offered to it, in token of his respect, a gold necklace and cross. But the Saint, being a lover of poverty, could not be induced to accept it. The prelate insisted that he should accept it, begging that he would not thus deprive him of the merit of making such a present to the most holy Virgin: "Monsignor," the Saint

answered him, "to the Madonna, in this case, your good intention and heart will suffice; for this gift cannot be accepted by one who professes the strictest poverty, such as is that of the Friars Minor." We would never be done were we to relate every single instance in which, for the same reason, he refused to accept similar gifts. Mention has already been made, in Part First, of presents offered or sent to him during every mission, and of some such refusals of them and of offerings made to the same image of Mary.

He would never accept, under any pretext, even the least portion of the alms, often very generous, which were collected during his sermons, leaving them altogether to others to dispose of without interfering, at most recommending that they use them to help the poor or provide the churches with sacred vessels, canopies and other articles necessary to expose the Blessed Sacrament with greater decorum. In one word, his poverty was always most rigorous, according to the testimony of those who knew and had been for a long time familiar with him; and he was so zealous about it that, not content to observe it strictly in his own person, he also endeavored to promote its practice with all rigor by his brethren as well. Whilst a Guardian he exhorted them with fervent discourses to love poverty and to detach themselves from all earthly things; thus it often happened that, moved by the efficacy of his words, they would go to him and lay at his feet their possessions, although articles of no value and permitted by the Rule. He wished that poverty should shine not only in the refectory, the cells and the entire building of the convent, but in the sacristy and the church as well; hence, in the Constitutions of the Retreat of Florence he strictly inculcated that they should not have church vestments of silk, and that the albs and the surplices should be simple, without ruffles and trimmings and without costly laces. From this poverty, which we would here call external, it easily appears how much his heart was detached from everything in this world that is perishable and earthly. Having placed all his hopes in God, he did not aspire to anything but the possession of Him and the eternal recompenses of heaven; therefore, he gave no thought whatever to those of this life, which he rather abhorred in his mind, well

knowing, with St. Bernard, that the affection for the material thing does more harm to the soul than the thing itself. It is this affection which, ordinarily, prevents one from loving God with all his heart and strength, as our Saint wished to do, and in which, as we shall presently see, he succeeded.

CHAPTER SEVENTH

The Charity or Love of St. Leonard for God.

ST. LEONARD knowing, by the light of Faith, that God is a Sovereign and Infinite God, nay, Goodness Itself by essence—that He contains all possible perfections without limit or measure, and consequently that He is worthy of all our affections and of all our love—determined, in his tenth Resolution, to love Him with all his heart, with all his soul and with his strength, directing to Him, as to an object most lovable in itself, all his thoughts, words and actions. He resolved often to excite in his soul acts of love, which he called acts of complacency, by taking delight in His infinite perfections ; of benevolence, by wishing that all people should love, serve and bless Him ; of preference, by esteeming Him more than all created things together, nay, holding all things valueless outside of God. He also resolved to make, at least seven times a day, an act of absolute conversion to God, as if he were just beginning his spiritual life, declaring, at the same time, that he desired to love Him constantly, intimately and most fervently, having no other end in view, than to give Him pleasure and satisfaction in all things. Because our Saint well knew that command of the Redeemer (John xiv, 15): "If you love Me, keep My commandments," he resolved also never to commit a venial sin with full advertence, and to detach himself more and more from all earthly things, keeping his heart wholly free from all such, in order to admit God alone. "And though," he added, "I shall not fail to commit many faults even then, and often I shall be

caught theft in hand, at least let all Heaven know that this is my desire, viz., to love God most perfectly, nay, to continue constantly in the exercise of love towards Him." Hence, he often protested that the love of God was the object of all his operations, and, therefore, whilst practicing all the virtues for particular motives, he endeavored to elevate them all by the general motive of charity, directing them to God and practicing them for His love. Whatever he was doing, then, in the convent or outside of it, on journeys or in the missions, either concerning his own person or that of his neighbor, he did everything to please God and to augment His honor and glory. As the virtue of charity is more perfect the more it is divested of every human interest, so, by loving God purely because He is worthy in Himself of being loved, St. Leonard reached this perfection of charity, saying sometimes, with great feeling, that though he might be sure that he would have to go to Hell, he, notwithstanding, wished to love his God with his whole heart: "I intend," he used to say, "to love my God with a sovereign love, and this only because He deserves it; and in this love I do not wish to fall below any creature whatsoever, because I intend to love Him as much as anyone can." Hence, when he exercised himself in certain acts of love of God, he appeared as if aflame, even his countenance being deeply flushed, so much so that he gave evidence of how his heart was burning, and showed that these acts proceeded from his heart so kindled and enlivened.

A certain person having written to him, asking him to teach her the manner of loving God: "Love Him," he answered, "without method and without measure; but I would not like your love to be weak, consisting in tears and outward marks of tenderness, but a love virile, pure, intimate, proceeding from a vivid light of faith, which makes us know how great is the beauty, the goodness and sanctity of God, who deserves to be loved with infinite love." Such was the divine love that burned in the heart of St. Leonard, who, in order that it might not become tepid, often resolved never to wish, deliberately, anything that might diminish the burning flame; nay, he purposed always to do what he perceived to be more perfect and pleasing to the Lord, saying and also writing that "our heart, is made for God

alone, and that, as we have but one heart, we must not divide it, but employ it all in loving God only: '*Unum Cor uni Deo*'—'One heart to one God.'" When a person begged him to give him instruction, or tell him something, he answered at once with great fervor: "Son, love God; do not forget it; love God!" To others he would say: "In the morning make this beautiful compact with God: 'O Lord, every time I shall say these holy words with my lips, or in my heart, "My Jesus, mercy!" I intend to make an act of most intense love towards Thee;' so that, when repeating often, through the day, this holy ejaculation, as many times as you shall say it, they will be so many acts of the love of God." To one distinguished person who was in trouble and who came to him for advice, he spoke thus: "The maxim which suits you is to suffer and to love, that is, what little you suffer either in your body on account of infirmity, or in your spirit because of sorrow, suffer it and love greatly; suffer and love, and that small suffering will please Jesus and will benefit and help you as though you were carrying a big cross, provided it be coupled with a great love." From another letter of the same person he gathered that she bore in her heart undue attachment to a son, and he answered her in the following terms: "All the love which is given to creatures is stolen from God. Let us love them, yes, but only as the images of God, and with a holy detachment, whereby they may not unduly occupy our thoughts, much less our hearts. Our nearest relation is the great God, to Whom infinite obligations bind us. Let us love Him with all our hearts, and let us feel that there is nothing in the world worthy of our love but God alone." Neither did he instill these maxims into others without being himself deeply penetrated with them; for, after he had exhorted that person, as we have just said, to suffer and to love, he added: "But I exhort you to suffer, whilst I play the poltroon. It is now forty years since I have been sick; I mean sick enough to require a physician. I wish, it is true, to suffer; but God knows I would not make good use of it; therefore, He does not afflict me with any suffering. Pray to God that He may send me the most painful illness that mortal man has ever endured, but that, at the same time, He may give me a most fervent love whereby I may wish to suffer even more,

and thus, nearing more and more the wished-for moment when I shall see and enjoy the Sovereign Good, I may die under the wine-press of the Cross, burnt up and reduced to ashes by the fire of His holy love."

As the true lover wishes to converse with the loved object and be as near as possible to him, so St. Leonard sought nothing more than this union ; hence, all his thoughts were occupied in contemplating the Divine greatness, and in constantly and familiarly communing with God in prayer. Whilst in the convent he never failed to attend to the three hours of mental prayer prescribed daily, some time during the day, or at night in the Retreat ; and if sometimes obedience compelled him to leave the choir, he then made use of the very works of charity, by union with his Creator, while engaged in behalf of His creatures, or endeavored to keep himself recollected when he was absent from the meditation held in common by the Religious. While in the choir and at mental prayer with his brethren, he appeared to be like a statue, for he constantly knelt immovable and upright ; he practiced this even during the last years of his life, when he was greatly weakened by his age and many labors. If wanted to hear a confession or to perform any other deed of charity, it was often necessary to call him several times and even to shake him, because, being wholly absorbed in the contemplation of his God, he remained as if in a trance. Though the greater part of his life, as we have seen, was spent in giving missions, still he knew how to arrange his work in such manner that it would not prevent him from praying at stated hours and uniting himself with God. During his very frequent journeys, after reciting the usual prayers with his brethren, he would continue to pray at some distance from them, and would so raise himself, mentally, to God, that, walking like one in a trance and not noticing where he stepped, he often dashed heavily against stones, wounding his feet, and at other times he found himself deep in the mud and slough, blaming his stupidity for it. Even while reading over the sermons he was to deliver, he constantly meditated upon those maxims which he wished to imprint upon the hearts of his hearers, saying it was more important to unite one's self to God in prayer than to work for the profit and welfare of souls. Dur-

ing the time of the missions he kept an alarm-clock in his cell, that he might rise every morning before daylight and make his customary meditation with his brethren ; which he never omitted, notwithstanding the very great fatigue he had undergone the day previous in the pulpit and in the confessional. Not satisfied with all he did daily, in order to commune in prayer with his God and become united to Him as his Loved One, twice a year he withdrew, as has already been said, to solitary places, with the same end in view. There, conversing all alone with God, and more and more enkindled with love for Him, he laid down those Resolutions, suggested to him by the same love, which have been printed in a separate place, for the good of others. (1) In fact, he came out of the solitude so fervent and burning with the love of God that, animated and strengthened by it, he went forth with greater courage to instruct the people and convert souls, not minding in the least the fatigue and hardships ; and showing in the midst of his labors and great sufferings that love conquers everything, endures everything, and that everything is easy for him who loves. What else could give to our Saint so much strength to undertake and lead, for so long a time, such a hard, penitential and laborious life, except the love of God and the wish to please Him and to labor for His glory? In fact, he often used to say : "In order to give God more pleasure and glory, I am ready to undergo any fatigue and suffering ; nay, even to sacrifice a thousand lives, if I had them, and to accept hell itself."

Is it any wonder, then, that, loving his God intensely, as he did, and seeking to do all that he understood would please Him, he, at the same time, hated sin so strongly—it being proper for a true lover to do whatever is pleasing to the person loved, and to hate and shun whatever is displeasing to the same? St. Leonard, well knowing how much God hates and abhors sin, made every effort to banish it entirely from the world, and often would say with extraordinary zeal : "For my part, I declare that I have but one enemy in this world, which is the accursed mortal sin ; and I have sworn to wage war against it till my last breath." Even while yet a youth he showed in himself a glorious

(1) As already stated, we will place them at the end of this book.

mastery over it, as has been said in Chapter First, Part First; and during his whole life he hated and abhorred it so that, according to the testimony of those who several times heard his general confessions, he never committed a mortal sin. To prevent others from falling into it, or to free them, if perchance they had already done so, he would often exclaim with sighs: "Ah! if God gave me the grace to save one soul, or, at least, to prevent one sin, I would willingly give my blood and my life. I would consider myself extremely happy, if by my blood and my life I could prevent a single mortal sin, which so offends and displeases my God." To this same end were directed all his labors, both from the pulpit and in the confessional, viz., to prevent and to remove sin from the world. For this he did not refuse very many long and hard journeys, even during the coldest seasons and over rough places; and he also wished to go among the heathen, as we have already seen, to shed his blood and lay down his life, in order to prevent offenses to God and prove to Him his love. This was indeed very great, there being no greater love, according to the saying of the Redeemer Himself, than that which embraces death for the love of the person beloved. In one word, as he ardently loved his God, he likewise loved whatever might please and be acceptable to Him, and hated and abhorred whatsoever he knew to be displeasing and offensive to Him, trying with all his might to do the former and to prevent or remove the latter. This disposition proceeded from the perfect uniformity with the will of his Loved One, which, as a true lover, he cherished within himself—an inseparable characteristic of a true friendship and a most evident token of a sincere love.

In fact, with a holy indifference to all things, our Saint desired or did not desire them, according to whether God willed them or not. Hence, he left this written: "One attachment only I claim to have, and it is to follow in everything the most holy will of God, made known through the Superiors or the Spiritual Fathers." Whatever work, therefore, he was commanded to do, no matter how hard and difficult, such as, to interrupt the missions, though he expected to reap much fruit from them; or, to undertake long journeys by land or voyages by sea; or, to leave the solitude to which he was wont to retire,

as we have seen, to converse solely with God, and where he remained with the greatest delight, making in it, as he used to say, the missions to himself and the Novitiate for Paradise—at once, without uttering a word, he did what he was told to do, in order to comply with God's will, which, in that order, he acknowledged and adored. Nay, he was so intensely anxious to do the will of God that, as far as it laid in his power, before undertaking any action whatever, he tried to make sure of the will of his Superiors, being certain thus to fulfill God's will, and to meet, in that action, the Divine pleasure and approval. As uniformity with the Divine will is more estimable and meritorious, when the judgment also submits to the Divine dispositions, St. Leonard always strove not only to conform his will to God's, but also to believe that whatever God disposed concerning him was for the best, being more conducive to the glory of God Himself, and of greater advantage to his own eternal salvation. Hence, he often had on his lips this ejaculation, which he also taught others to say: "*Fiat in me, circa me, et circa mea omnia, sanctissima, perfectissima et amabilissima voluntas tua, Domine, nunc et deinceps in æternum. Amen!*"—"O Lord, let Thy most holy, most perfect, and most lovable will be done in me, around me, and in all my works, now and hereafter for eternity. So be it!"

If he happened to meet anyone who, because of adversity, broke out into lamentations and expressions of resentment, he would tell him in a very pleasing manner: "Brother, we have a very good and very loving Father, Who is our God, Who loves us most tenderly. Can you suppose that a Father so loving may ordain anything to harm a son for whom He did so much, and for whom, provided he be an obedient son, He holds Paradise ready?" To others, that they might be encouraged to think always of God, to conform to His will, and be constantly united to Him: "Love God truly," he would say, "and you will always think of Him; and thinking of Him, you will become more and more inflamed with His love," which words clearly indicate that he was constantly meditating upon God, and, loving nothing but Him, he strove to be united to Him and to conform himself in all things to His Divine will. It is a truth, that when

one loves a person with a deep love, he can neither think nor speak of anyone else ; that he likes to converse with the loved one, and resolves to please him, studying a thousand ways to serve him, and abhors everything that might displease or offend him. Such was the love St. Leonard bore to God, as appears from the tenor of his life, from the Resolutions he made, and from what has been related above ; from all this it must be admitted that it was a deep love, of fine temper, and very pure, as can be seen even better from what he wrote, a year previous to his death, to a person leading a spiritual life, who had communicated to him the condition of her soul : "I would like to die soon," he wrote, "in order to go and enjoy God in that place where one loves perfectly. I am old and now I know by experience that, in this lower world, one never attains to that perfection that is desired, and, instead of growing in love, one gets more and more cold. This notwithstanding, I will nothing but what my God wills, having no other object in my thoughts and desires than the perfect fulfillment of His most holy will."

CHAPTER EIGHTH.

The Charity of St. Leonard towards his Neighbor.

THE precept to love our neighbor, as Jesus Christ Himself declares, is like unto that, which is given to us, to love God, because it springs from the same motive ; so in proportion as our Hero advanced in the love of the Creator, he advanced likewise in the love of the creatures made to His image and likeness. Looking at them as such, he loved them with great tenderness, procuring for them all possible advantages, being always careful not to do them any harm, and ever anxious to work for their good. He was never heard to say anything that might cause grief to anybody ; nay, he praised everyone, and though, at times, someone might have done what was deserving of blame and correction, and others might criticise his action,

he, with his charity, sought to cover and excuse the fault or failing, placing in view something else worthy of praise, which he saw in the person in question. He pined away with compassion at the sight of the poor and needy, and, as far as it was possible, he strove to succor them in their necessities. While in Florence, the people knowing in what high esteem the Grand Duke Cosimo III held him, constantly asked him, either singly or in numbers, to obtain from that religious prince some subsidy for their wants. The charitable Father, seeing in those poor people the very person of Jesus Christ, would take the memoranda and later obtain for them what they wished for. But, as these demands were continuous, and as the Servant of God presented almost every day such petitions, he feared lest, in the end, this might annoy that prince; therefore, one day, just as he was about to present him with a number of petitions, he told him that he was afraid he was importuning him too much, but that seeing so many poor persons, he felt his heart moved, because, on account of his own poverty, he could not relieve them, and consequently he endeavored to secure for them some help from others. "Do not hesitate to take all the petitions that are presented to you," answered the Grand Duke, "and all that can be done will be done to console all; and, I assure you," he added, "that, especially when it is a question of preventing an offense against God, I would willingly give one-half of my State." After this answer was once given, many were the persons and the families who had recourse to the charitable mediation of St. Leonard, who secured suitable employments for more than one, for many spinsters he obtained the dowry to marry, and for many women of the world a suitable allowance to live quietly or retire to a cloister, there to do penance. A similar charity for his neighbor moved him to exhort his companion, in the time of the missions, to prepare every day something extra for the poor, and caused the provisions that devout persons had sent for his own use and that of his own companions to be distributed among the former. If they met a person who, besides being poor, was also sick, he felt so touched with compassion that, unable to give him anything else, he deprived himself of some personal belonging to help him a little. One morning he was called from the Con-

vent of St. Bonaventure to hear the confession of a poor man, and at the sight of the wretch, who, being half-naked, was shivering with cold, he was so moved with compassion, that he took from under his tunic a shield of wool and gave it to him. His companion noticed that, after this, the Servant of God, already advanced in age, was always benumbed, it being in the heart of winter, and, suspecting the truth, notified the Superior of the fact, and he, at once, supplied the need.

When unable to assist the poor himself, or through others, he would offer up prayers for them to the Lord, that He might relieve them, or else he supplied them with what he called intentional alms, that is, declaring he would have given any great amount had it only been in his power. To a person who ventured to tell him that such good will would avail very little to those who had recourse to him for alms, he answered: "As I have the desire to distribute much alms, and am unable to do it on account of my poverty, none the less do I give pleasure to God and help also my neighbor, in thought, at least; inasmuch as I offer to God this good will of mine and beg of Him to provide for my neighbor!" Neither was his charity limited to any particular persons; but it extended even more ardently to procure the public welfare. At one time an earthquake shook the city of Florence terribly, while he was the Guardian of the Convent del Monte, and he inflicted a long and bloody discipline upon himself, as did all his Religious, in order to appease the anger of God. The next morning they visited, in procession and barefooted, many different churches of the city with the same end in view. At another time, when there was great mortality among the cattle in the Tuscan State, it was feared that the infection, increasing, might attack all human beings, as many people were already dying. When he saw that the gates of Florence were being shut from fear of contagion, and that all the people were very much frightened, he gathered together his Religious, and explained to them what an act of charity it would be to offer their lives in the service of the pest-stricken people. "I am determined," he added, "to sacrifice myself and will regard myself fortunate if I shall be given the opportunity to die for charity's sake." The effect of these words was that all his

Religious unanimously offered to follow his example, and confirmed this disposition by secret votes, taken later on, not one being wanting; but as the danger soon ceased, they remained with the merit of their good will.

He entertained no less charity for his Religious; for, though he was very harsh and severe with himself and his own body, he was, nevertheless, very gentle and kind with others, commiserating all, and rejoicing when each one had all he needed according to his station and condition. While he was Guardian he inculcated into the officers of the convent that they should provide and prepare with charity the food needed for the Religious family, and, when he invited others to eat, he would tell them they should not take example from him, because, as he possessed a robust constitution, he could easily practice abstinence. With the like charity he brought himself to moderate the rigors of the fasts that were kept during the missions, from the effects of which his companions often became grievously sick, leaving it to each one of them to eat what was necessary; but he himself continued until the evening with a cup of water embittered by wormwood, or mixed with barley, though he underwent, every day, many severe labors. During their journeys they all walked barefooted, but whenever they were compelled to wade through icy waters, or climb sharp rocks, and go through woods, he made his companions put on sandals, while he continued to walk barefooted, often bruising his feet, even to the point of shedding blood. But his charity for the sick was of the tenderest, not only in the places in which he gave the missions, where he visited them all after the sermons, consoling them and exhorting them to make a good confession; but when called upon to assist a person in distress, he went at once, by day or by night, without giving the least thought to the rough roads or unsettled and stormy weather. He encouraged the sick to suffer the infirmity which afflicted them willingly and resignedly, and, still better, he assisted them in their spiritual needs; then, in order to excite them to greater patience, he would pray to God that, if it pleased Him, He might transfer their sickness to himself, thus freeing the patients. A Religious of St. Bonaventure's Retreat, having, through a serious illness, lost his eyesight, had recourse to St. Leonard,

in order to receive from him consolation in his affliction ; and the Saint said to him that such blindness was a treasure-trove, for which he ought to rejoice, because thus he had one enemy less to fight against—that of sight—by which so many sins are committed, and because of which a great part of mankind is damned. The Religious answered that he willingly endured the blindness, and was only sorry that he could not celebrate Mass. The Saint replied : "Then let us do thus—you pray that the will of God may be done in this matter ; and I will pray heartily to God that, if it pleases Him, He may send this blindness to me and restore to you your eyesight. And I declare that I will remain blind very willingly, provided you have the consolation of seeing and satisfying your pious wish to celebrate the Holy Mass."

He also extended this, his great charity, to the Faithful Departed, trying, as well as he could, to relieve and even deliver them from the pains of Purgatory. He preached on this subject with such fervor, and urged the people so strongly to compassionate the suffering souls, that, wherever he delivered this sermon, most abundant collections would be gathered ; all of which, as we have already seen in various places of Part First, the zealous orator caused to be distributed among the churches, so that Masses might be offered to the Lord for those blessed souls. Every morning he formed the intention and purpose of gaining all the indulgences he could in that day, in order to relieve the poor souls ; and whenever he passed churches, where he knew more copious indulgences might be gained, entering them, he would say to his companion : "Let us go in to relieve the poor departed." During the time he was exercising the apostolic ministry he could not visit the churches, and, therefore, obtained from the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, for himself and companions, the privilege of gaining thrice a day the indulgences of the Holy Land, and of applying them, as he did in fact, to the Souls in Purgatory. His charity towards those holy souls went so far that, often when exhorting others, during his journeys and upon many other occasions, to be charitable to the departed, he would add, in order to encourage them, that he had made a donation to the Souls in Purgatory of all his

good works and the merits of his labors, prayers, Masses and penances.

But to revert to his charity for the living, who shall ever be able to tell how great it was in procuring the salvation of their souls? If we consider well his whole life, it was but a constant exercise of charity, an uninterrupted labor to bring souls to God, and He alone knows the number of those who, through his preaching and admonition, or through the confessional, were led to Him, being rescued from the mire of their vices, and set on the road to Paradise from the road to Hell. In the confessional he followed the rule of treating the penitent as he would have wished himself to be treated, had he found himself in the same state; and therefore, when sinners came to him loaded with iniquities, and who had kept aloof from the Sacraments for many years, he would say to himself: "Brother Leonard, if thou wert in the place of this poor fellow, wouldst thou not like to be dealt with in all kindness? Do thou, therefore, unto others what thou wouldst have others do unto thyself." With this rule in his mind, he received them with extraordinary affection; he encouraged them not to allow themselves to be overcome by shame; he never interrupted them, neither did he urge them to make haste, nor did he exhibit any impatience in hearing them; but, helping them in all possible ways and speaking to them in a pleasant manner, he made use of all the best means to win them over and bring them back to God. He recommended them to their Guardian Angels that the latter might assist them in a special manner to make a good confession; and in giving them absolution he felt as though he were pouring upon their souls the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ to wash them of their sins. He did all this with such fervor that those sinners remained no less full of compunction than of joy. His greatest consolation was to see at his feet a great sinner; he would rejoice to see him brought to repentance, and would so touch his heart by his fiery words that the sinner would break out into a shower of tears—tears of sorrow for his sins. Many there were who had this singular fortune of confessing to our Saint, and of being absolved and instructed by him, thus amending and wholly changing their lives. He used to say that he wished to draw

into the net the big fishes, meaning by these the persons most wicked and steeped in vice. He had their conversion and salvation so much at heart that, whenever he succeeded in bringing any of them back to the right road, his countenance plainly showed the internal joy he felt.

During the course of the many years which he spent in giving the missions and preaching to so many people of different provinces and States, he often found sinners of this kind, and, God permitting it, the most notorious and habituated ones wished to have the consolation of confessing to our Saint, who, with the greatest joy, embraced them, thanking the Lord, because, through his ministry, He wished to cleanse and bring back to Himself those erring souls. We have seen already, in Part First, that Hell, foreseeing the great loss it would have to sustain by the conversion of these obstinate and wicked sinners, tried, many times, to prevent the Servant of God from giving the missions in certain localities ; and that he, in order not to surrender to the Devil, did not notice the affronts he received, but only wished to gain souls to Heaven, therefore, he courageously overcame all opposition, and began the Apostolic Work, endeavoring to influence all his hearers to make a good Act of Contrition and then go to confession. With undaunted zeal and great clearness he preached to them and gave the catechetical instructions on all points. During the missions, all the time he could spare, after preaching, he spent in the confessional hearing the confessions of the penitents, who crowded around him in such numbers that, often, this occupied him not only whole days but nights as well. He was busy at most inconvenient hours, forgetting, sometimes, even to eat and sleep. If everyone in any of the towns had not gone to confession during the mission, he would tarry there for some days afterward, in order to hear the confessions of all. He had done so in a town of the Maremme of Siena, where they had no clock, therefore many of the inhabitants called him up in the middle of the night, and he went immediately to the church, remained there in the confessional till daylight, and, after celebrating Mass, returned to it, and there stayed without food and sleep for thirty consecutive hours, that is, until he had heard all with the greatest charity and patience.

When the Most Serene Palatine Electrix, Anna de' Medici, had been informed of this occurrence, she procured for him an alarm-clock, which would help him to distribute his hours while exercising his apostolic ministry.

But the clearest proof of his ardent charity for his neighbors is to be found in the many missions which he gave, without interruption, for the space of forty-four years, in various places and provinces, going about everywhere with wonderful zeal for the salvation of souls, to obtain which he suffered adversities, labors, pains, hardships, risking even his own life many times in long voyages by sea and journeys by land. When he met with obstacles and mishaps, instead of losing courage, he renewed his efforts with more energy; and when called upon to endure ill usage or great inconvenience, while journeying to give the missions, he put that down as a good omen; and, rejoicing at it in his heart, would say: "It is evident that this mission displeases hell very much; and we may gather from it a great profit; as this little suffering will have the effect of moving God to grant, in greater abundance, the grace of conversion to these people." Once he had suffered for four months severe pain in one of his feet, which had been wounded, while walking shoeless, by a splinter of bone, and, consequently, he had to have it cut open in order to extract it; but he said cheerfully to a person who reproached him for having so long endured the pain without trying to obtain relief: "You know not that it is the glory of a soldier, when he can show the wounds he has received in defending the honor of his prince." Another time, whilst returning from Corneto to Rome barefooted, amidst snow and ice, according to his custom, his companion noticed that five of the toe-nails had been torn away from the toes, and he showed his pity when he saw the blood oozing and thought of the pain that the Servant of God must have felt, though he gave no sign of it. St. Leonard, turning to his companion, who thus sympathized with him: "Brother," said he to him, "there is no occasion to feel sad and sorry for this, because these are treasures; they are five nails lost for the love of God, and they are five crowns won for Paradise." If on any occasion mention was made of the sufferings he endured in the exercise of the apostolic ministry, he

would say that all was very little when compared with what the Saints endured, and that he would have deemed it his great fortune had it been his lot to die whilst actually laboring for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. When, during the missions, people noticed that he was depressed and feeble, and begged him to give up, for a few days, preaching and other work, he would answer with admirable intrepidity that "it is a shame for a soldier, as soon as he sees himself wounded, to lay down the sword; but that, at such a time, he must rather show greater courage in fighting." And in confirmation of this sentiment, shortly before his death, he wrote thus to a Religious stationed in Rome: "The little animal is old and cannot last much longer; but this notwithstanding, as long as there is the skin, I go ahead, and will rejoice if I die sword in hand against hell," viz., snatching the souls from the clutches of the devil and restoring them to God. In one word this can be said of him and his zeal for the salvation of his neighbors: "*Aquæ multæ non potuerunt exstinguere charitatem*"—"Many waters could not quench charity, neither shall the floods drown it" (Cant. viii, 7).

And, in truth, forty-four years, as has been said, he employed in the office of missionary, joining to the labors of this ministry all the rigors and asperities of penance, which he prescribed for himself in the Resolutions he made and in the Regulations he adopted for his missions. His charity for his neighbors made him overcome every obstacle, labor and fatigue; hence, in spite of opposition and of nature itself, weakened by age and penances, he visited, during the above-mentioned period of time, eighty-eight bishoprics, preached in two hundred and sixteen places, giving, in all of these places altogether, three hundred and twenty-six missions, with that result and profit to souls which we have already mentioned. His charity was not even satisfied in doing this much for the salvation of his neighbors' souls; but he also exhorted others to do the same, saying to them with the greatest fervor: "If but one single soul be gained to God, does it seem to you so little—a soul that is worth the Blood of Jesus Christ?" For this reason he desired the missionaries to be numerous, and, praising those priests, secular or regular as they

might be, who dedicated themselves to this work, he exhorted all the people to attend their sermons, and often would go himself to hear them. The name of "Mission" alone, he was wont to say, moves the people, adding, at the same time, that God gives His blessing in a special manner to two things, viz., to the spiritual exercises for educated persons, and to the missions for all, but especially those given to the common people.

A very wealthy citizen had established several pious institutions in Florence, and wished to found some more, but, before doing so, asked advice of St. Leonard, who thus said to him: "Now listen: Jesus Christ has shed and offered up His Blood for the salvation of souls; hence, I could not advise you any better than by telling you to devote all your substance to co-operate in the conversion of the same. Make, therefore, a legacy that, at stated times, will assist the missions, by which many souls will be converted, and you shall be a co-operator in their salvation." The advice pleased the man, who left for this object a suitable fund, so that a beginning was made of the pious work suggested by the charity that St. Leonard felt for his neighbors. Were I to relate all his charitable acts I would never finish. I will only mention, in addition to what has already been said, that, with the object of helping his neighbor, he wrote many instructive treatises, such as the "Sacred Manual" for the Virgins consecrated to God; the "Instruction" for hearing with profit the Holy Mass; the "Method" to meditate well on the Passion of the Redeemer in the *Via Crucis* (Stations of the Cross); the "Directory" for a General Confession; the "Rules" for the Congregation, founded by him, of the Lovers of Jesus and Mary, and other similar pamphlets, which will remain everlasting monuments of his burning zeal for the salvation of souls. I will add, moreover, that, on account of the love he bore to them, his greatest consolation was to hear that some great sinner had become converted, and that, because of the most ardent thirst which he always felt for such conversions, when writing to a priest, he said: "In the month of October, if God shall bless my journey, I will reach Rome, where I stop rather unwillingly, because, being near death, I would like, during these few days,

to work day and night, to prevent sins, of which the world is already so full."

Finally, I will conclude by quoting a phrase of his, from which it can be gathered to what degree his charity for his neighbors had attained. He said constantly, in his private discourses and publicly, whenever he became heated in the fervor of the sermon, that he loved souls with a love so intense, that he not only wished all of them to be loved, and would spare no fatigue to set them, as far as it laid in his power, on the road to heaven, but, moreover, he would be satisfied to be placed over the mouth of hell, in order to close it, and would not care whether his senses suffered the most atrocious torments, provided he could prevent anybody from falling into it in the future. In keeping with this sentiment is the answer which he once made when he was asked, while journeying to a mission, whither he was going: "I am going to make war against hell," he replied, full of zeal and energy.

CHAPTER NINTH.

The Prudence of St. Leonard.

WE will here consider Prudence as a virtue, which has reference to God, in so far as it suggests all those means which are necessary to direct all our operations to the acquiring of the Christian perfection, and consequently of God Himself; hence, regarding it in this light, we will speak of it in this chapter. How well endowed St. Leonard was with this eminent virtue, which is the soul and rule of all the others, can be gathered from the whole course of his life, exact in everything and regulated not only for himself, but for others as well, in order that he himself might reach and at the same time lead his neighbor to the attainment of the eternal bliss. As to the rule concerning himself, he was so wise and circumspect, that is, prudent in his actions, that he was always careful lest he place some impediment in the road to grace; nay, he allowed himself to

be guided by prudence, on every occasion, to do, as we have already seen, whatever was most perfect, most pleasing to God and of greatest spiritual profit to himself. In order to prevent a mistake in this, he never undertook anything without first seeking counsel, according to the advice of the Holy Ghost; depending in everything upon the direction of the Spiritual Fathers, whom he would consult in regard to what he had to do. When he felt that God called him to the Religious State, we have seen how deeply he meditated and how long a time he took to mature this thought, and so assure himself of his vocation. Neither was he satisfied to take counsel from one Father only; but consulted several zealous confessors, well knowing that, "*ubi multa consilia, ibi sapientia*"—"there is safety (so translates the Douay Bible) in much counsel" (Prov. xi, 14), before taking a resolution in so important a matter as the choosing of a future state. Such a rule followed by him while still in the world, united to a virtuous and exemplary life, and the fact of his having embraced one of the most rigid Orders in the Church, clearly prove that he, even while yet a layman and young, was adorned with that Christian Prudence, which is solicitous in seeking the most opportune means for attaining the Final End, and which, having found these means, adopts them without delay and very wisely puts them into execution.

After he became a Religious he never permitted those lights, with which God endowed him so prodigally, to be extinguished in his mind; but, following them in all his actions, he proved himself always most zealous in doing whatever might help him to attain the End he had in view upon entering Religion, which was the sanctifying of his soul and the securing of Paradise. I will not speak here of his Regular Observance, which is the most indispensable and the safest way for a Religious to attain this End, because it would take too long and might cause confusion; but I will tell only a few of the many things that could be told of his great Prudence in choosing and putting into practice all the means he thought most suitable to lead him to a most sublime perfection. It has been said, in Part First, that among the other industries which, for this purpose, he made use of, even while yet a student, one was to select some particular virtue in

which to exercise himself every week, and to make as many acts of it as was possible. He would introduce it as a subject in his discourses with his companions, and would try to persuade them also to practice it and render to each other an account of how they kept it, correcting each other, if found remiss, and instructing one another as to the easiest manner of acquiring it, and of faithfully carrying it out. As to himself, he examined his conduct, as a prudent merchant, and balanced his accounts, and considered whether he had made any gains ; and, when he found he had lost instead, he strove with all promptitude to repair the loss. By this method, choosing one virtue every week, and exercising in it so that he might possess it, he constantly increased in the virtue wonderfully, and progressed in the way of that perfection to which he aspired. As he advanced in years the fervent wish to attain to perfection increased, though God alone knows the means that his ardent wish made him find and put into practice with such efficacious resolution. However, the simple reading of the often-mentioned Resolutions, which he made and kept faithfully till his death, would sufficiently make us understand how he employed every means that he thought necessary or opportune to reach, in this life, that sublime contemplation of the Sovereign Good, and thus to be intimately united to Him by an interior link, advancing from virtue to virtue, finally to see Him face to face in the heavenly Sion. A great Prudence was that of prescribing for himself everything he was to do each day, each week, each month, each year, upon every occasion ; and then to make daily a rigorous examination of conscience, in order to correct whatever fault he might have committed in the fulfilling of those self-imposed regulations. This clearly shows that he, as a wise and prudent man, never had anything else in view, except that last end for which we have been created, namely, to know, love and serve God in the present life, in order to go afterwards and possess Him eternally in the next ; and in this the true Prudence of the Saints consists. Hence, he measured his every step, weighed his every word, watched over his every action, regulated everything with such prudence that it might be acceptable to God and profitable to himself.

But, while he was so prudent in regulating his own conduct,

he was not less prudent in regulating that of others who had recourse to him. Indeed, wonderful were the instructions he imparted to some, in order to encourage them to practice virtue and to make them advance in it day by day ; and it is well-nigh impossible to describe the manner in which he took in charge even the most abandoned souls and led them to God. Many were the persons, even of high standing, and from various cities and towns, who, by his counsel and prudent direction, undertook to walk in the path of virtue ; some of these even dying in the fame of marked holiness of life. He was wont to say, among other things, for the instruction and guidance of anyone wishing to attain to perfection that "one must look up high in order to strike the mark, and that to be satisfied with a mediocre virtue, without aspiring to greater things, is an indication that one does not wish to make any spiritual progress, and, consequently, being dragged down suddenly by the weight of his passions, he will either miserably fall or will be dangerously near it." In directing virtuous persons, St. Leonard gave them rules by which they might reach a sublime perfection ; and, as he himself employed the means most suitable to attain the wished-for end, so, in instructing others, he pointed out to them, with great prudence, the means most suitable and convenient to their condition, in order that they might arrive at the end they wished to secure. Once he had a certain conference upon the interior peace with a Religious, and was teaching him the manner to secure it and keep it. The Religious was anxious to obtain the Saint's teaching in writing, so that he might have it for future reference, and begged him by letter for it, while St. Leonard was giving a mission in a distant place. Having received this request, the Servant of God, in order to console that Religious, answered him thus : "Four are the principal things required to secure peace of heart, without which we can do no good for ourselves nor for others. First, to be dead to the world, to creatures, self and everything that is not God, keeping the heart free and unincumbered from all creatures, so that whatever is not God, or does not belong to God, should be esteemed less than a grain of sand. Secondly, to live in total abandonment into the hands of Divine Providence, and always to attribute whatever happens day by day, small or

great, propitious or adverse, to the dispositions of Divine Providence, Who so wills or permits, holding for certain that it is the best and the most convenient, both for the glory of God and for our eternal salvation. Thirdly, to love suffering, both interior and exterior ; and to hold especially dear the contradictions, the scorn and desertions of creatures, remembering that, whilst the Paradise of heaven consists in joys, the Paradise of earth consists in suffering. And whenever one is weary of sickness, contempt and suffering, he should quickly turn his eyes to Jesus, Who had for his familiar companions sovereign sorrow, sovereign contempt and sovereign poverty. Fourthly, not to undertake many things, though good ; but only those things that one's own office requires, according to the rule of obedience, and above all not to do anything in a hurry and with excitement, but calmly and with modesty, practicing this holy modesty in the words, the gestures and the whole deportment. As to myself, every day I make my examination on these points and always find that I have failed in something. I hope your Reverence will profit more thereby than I did."

From this fragment of letter the reader may think and know, in part, what was his Christian Prudence in teaching others the way to heaven and the practice of virtue. It is not to be wondered, therefore, that persons of every condition, poor and rich, men and women, nobles and plebeians, lay and ecclesiastics, and even regulars of the various Orders, though qualified for virtue and learning, had recourse to him from near and far, as to a very wise and prudent teacher, asking of him, in words or in writing, assistance, advice and direction in order to properly regulate their lives ; and he gave to all salutary directions, suitable to the state and condition of each one. Hence it is that all those persons admiring his Prudence and wisdom, proclaimed him openly to be a man gifted by God with extraordinary light to point out the easy, sure and short road to Paradise. During the short space of time that he remained in Rome, before giving the missions, a great number of people went every day to the Convent of St. Bonaventure, to confer with him about the most important affair of their eternal salvation. It was amazing to see that to the requests of twenty or more persons, who together

consulted him on different points, he would give, in a few words, such appropriate and satisfactory answers to each, that it would seem as if he had studied over them for a long time. These answers, delivered in a few words, would afterwards serve to each one as a rule for his mode of life, so that he might walk with security in the ways of the Lord. He would suggest to all the most suitable means, and would send them away satisfied and happy. Where another one would have employed hours in listening to so many persons and in advising them, he, in the shortest time, and often without hearing the whole of their conversation, would admirably instruct and console them all. But more numerous still were the persons who, even from very distant places, had recourse to him by letters; and both while he was stationed in the convents, and while he was actually engaged in the missions, by every mail delivery he received a great quantity of these letters, all of which he answered, either by solving the doubts and the difficulties proposed to him, or by giving advice and light, according to the needs of the petitioner. He did this with such adroitness and wisdom that the people, perfectly acquiescing in his advice, would revere them as if God had dictated them to His Servant, and made use of them, without fear of erring, for their own instruction and profit.

But though the Prudence of St. Leonard shone so brightly in instructing and directing persons who were already walking the road of virtue and perfection, and who wished to advance in it more and more, it appeared even more brightly in leading and conducting to this end the most sinful and lost souls. One could not but admire in him a special gift of Prudence in bringing them to God, and in suggesting to them the most efficacious and opportune remedies, in order to maintain themselves in the state of grace and to practice the necessary virtues. When great sinners happened to meet him, as charity urged him to receive them lovingly, so Prudence taught him how to treat and instruct them with discretion. He well knew how to apply to each, according to his character and sins, the leniency of pleasant exhortation or the rigor of a stern correction, and thus opportunely making use, sometimes of the sweet and sometimes of the bitter, he sent away the most proud and refractory sinners

humble and repentant. He was convinced that kindness rather than severity should be employed with penitents, and that the more wicked they are the more they ought to be pitied; therefore, besides acting himself according to this maxim, he also recommended it to the other confessors, adding, moreover, that, when compelled by the duties of their office either to deny or delay absolution to anybody, they should deport themselves with such Prudence, and make use of such expressions, that the penitent would see that it was done for no other end than his own spiritual advantage. In regard to this he used to say, and also left it written: "Deserving of all blame are those confessors who receive the poor penitents brusquely and with improper bullyings, which irritate them. They should welcome them with calm mind and countenance, and with meek mien, making them feel that all is done for their own good; enlightening their understanding, so that they may submit cheerfully and willingly accept the confessor's decision." That he himself so acted was shown by the fact that, out of so many who went to him to confession, there was not one who departed unsatisfied and displeased. After he had patiently heard them and helped them to throw out the poison of their sins, and had encouraged them not to allow themselves to be conquered by shame, he would employ words so appropriate, both sweet and efficacious, that he would induce them to put into practice those remedies which he suggested to them as necessary. If anyone had to return several times before receiving absolution, our Saint in the end would weep bitterly; and more than one was heard to thank the Lord and say in a joyful voice, after making his confession: "Father Leonard has rescued me out of hell." If it were not too long a story, we could here recount the numerous conversions he made in all the places where he dwelt, or where he preached the penance, because, under God, they were all consequences of his Prudence, no less than of his zeal.

One of the most difficult works to be engaged in, and which requires the greatest Prudence, is certainly that of giving the missions. This is so arduous that, if not regulated with prudent conduct, it is very easy to dash against the rocks, and, instead of winning souls to God, to risk losing one's own soul, together

with reputation and dignity. This passing from one place to another to preach to people of different characters, manners and customs ; to banish from each the vices, and to introduce into each a perfect reformation ;—in one word, waging open war upon Hell,—is so hard an undertaking that, in order to succeed in it, great aptitude and Prudence are required—that Prudence which fits exactly the place, the time and the persons, because many difficulties and intricate cases are often met with. Now, our Evangelical Laborer exercised for the space of forty-four years, as has been repeatedly said, in different places and times, this ministry so difficult of success, without causing the least trouble ; so it must indeed be said that he conducted himself with the greatest Prudence. Though in most of the places he found many thorns and much cockle to uproot, and though often the devil made every effort to prevent the missions entirely, or else tried in many ways to interrupt them when they were in progress, yet St. Leonard, without the slightest effort, was so skillful and methodical that, if at the start he was unwillingly received by the adepts of vice, he would finally win everybody's heart, and, at the conclusion, those very opponents would accompany his departure in tears and would wish that, at least, his stay could be prolonged among them. If any particular section was more depraved than its neighbors, St. Leonard was destined to give the missions in it, and when it seemed almost impossible to succeed, he, after a few sermons, and sometimes even on the very first day of his appearance on the platform, would make himself master of the souls of all his hearers. He delivered his thoughts with such an art that he succeeded in penetrating the hearts of those very sinners who were plunged into the sins against which he inveighed ; and he was, at the same time, so circumspect and Prudent that, in proclaiming the ugliness of the vice, he did not offend, in the least, the wicked men who listened to him. Hence it happened that they amended their lives, and, detesting their faults from their hearts, loved the Sacred Minister who, while so gently uncovering their sores, knew how to heal them without irritating them.

But more than anywhere else did he make use of his Prudence in Corsica, when he was sent there, as has been related in

Part First, for the good and spiritual advantage of those islanders. That island was then torn by revolutions and tumults, and divided by the most obstinate and mortal hatreds and enmities. The people were split into two factions, the largest of which hated the government of the Genoese lords, and were constantly committing murders and other grave disorders, all of which had reduced that island to a forest of wild beasts. And there, in 1744, was St. Leonard sent, in order to preach the penance and to persuade the inhabitants to lay down their hatred and become reconciled among themselves and with God. When one reflects upon this serious and horrible situation, he will easily comprehend how much Prudence our Hero needed when there. He, a Genoese, was sent there at the solicitation of the Republic of Genova. This fact alone will make clear to all how much precaution he had to exercise in every word he uttered, in regulating every gesture, movement and action, so that he might not irritate those exasperated spirits, who, as related in Chapters XIV and XV of Part First, had come to hear the sermon armed and ready to kill one another on the spot. Yet the Man of God knew how to act with such method and Prudence under such critical and dangerous circumstances that, though those people heard themselves reprehended by him for their excesses, still they loved him tenderly, listened to him attentively, and conceived such a high regard and esteem for him that, not daring to oppose what he enjoined on them, he succeeded in reforming the morals and removing the discords in all the places where he preached. He would probably have reduced the whole Island of Corsica to perfect and lasting tranquillity had he not been compelled to leave it suddenly, as was told in the last of the two above-mentioned chapters. If, then, St. Leonard regulated his actions with so much Prudence, that he made this beautiful and necessary virtue shine in all of them, even the most arduous and difficult, it must be said that he possessed it in a sublime and very heroic degree.

CHAPTER TENTH.

With how much diligence St. Leonard practiced the Virtue of Justice with himself.

THOUGH the aggregate and result of all the virtues is ordinarily expressed by the name of Justice, and he who possesses them thus is called just, and therefore, for this reason, were so called in Holy Writ, Noah, Job, the Patriarch St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and others, yet we will here speak of it as of a particular virtue, teaching and commanding us to give everyone his due. As man is a debtor to himself, to God and to his neighbor, we shall first see in this chapter how St. Leonard was Just to himself. In the first place, then, our Saint observed Justice with himself by endeavoring always, both as a secular and as a Religious, to promote his own spiritual welfare and to attain to the end for which he had been created, by the acquisition and practice of all the virtues. He preserved his soul with so much jealousy from every sin, that persons who had been familiar with him constantly, asserted that he preserved intact his baptismal innocence, guarding himself from every stain of sin. He was in the habit of saying, therefore, that he "esteemed purity of conscience more than all the treasures of the world;" and abhorred also venial sin, which, though not depriving the soul of God's grace, nevertheless can cause the fervor of charity to grow cold in one's soul, dispose him to mortal sin, or place him in the danger of falling into it, than which no greater misfortune can happen to a man. Our Saint was convinced that "a venial sin, knowingly committed, weighed more on the side of evil than all the fruit that might be gathered from all the missions possible counted on the side of good." It was his maxim that "no sin before God is light and small, when considered as an offense against the Creator." In writing to a Religieuse, to insure her to guard from every fault, he thus says: "Is it not enough to know that venial sin is displeasing to God, for us to keep from committing it?" And to this reason he added the other, viz., that it checks in us the advance toward

Christian perfection. He who ardently aspired to it and wished to become Just, by the possession of all the virtues in which Christian perfection consists, would therefore abhor and hate venial sin.

Regulating his life with such principles, and constantly thirsting for Justice, he adopted an exact rule concerning all the virtues suitable to his state, prescribing to himself those means that could more easily lead him to the acquisition of these virtues, and also practicing them for the motives peculiar to each one of them. This burning desire to be just, by the possession of all the virtues, can be more easily gathered from a memorandum written by him for his own use, which was found and read after his death, and which runs thus: "Having made the spiritual exercises in this Convent of St. Angelo di Montorio, in the year 1732, from July to August 10th, and having read over my Resolutions, I renewed them, fully resolved to keep them literally; and, as all perfection consists in loving God and our neighbor, for the observance of these two precepts, although, because of my weakness, I do not make a vow, still I make a most determined resolution, that, in order to observe the first, I will do everything that I know to be of greater perfection (according to the advice of my confessor), and will lead, interiorly and exteriorly, a life of angelical purity, coupled with a wish to practice all the virtues in a heroic degree, as far as able, with God's help. I will not let any occasion of mortifying myself in any manner pass by, being done, at last, with the world and with myself, happen what may, provided that I love God and die for the love of Him. For the observance of the second precept, though I make no vow, I resolve to wear myself out day and night with an ardent desire that the whole world be converted; that all stray souls return to the right path; and that the spiritual ones become more and more perfect; and never to draw back when there is a question of helping a soul to love God a little more. I will devote myself to assist my neighbors in their temporal needs, but in the manner laid down in my Resolutions, and according to my condition. In one word, I purpose never to rest from seeking God, loving God, and uniting in close union with God, interiorly and exteriorly; and to this end, several times in the day, I will renew myself in the

spirit, turning lovingly to God, by seeking His pleasure and His divine liking, and fulfilling His most holy will in all things, small and great. When in the particular examination of conscience at noon, and at the general examen in the evening, I shall find that I have failed in these two most necessary Resolutions, I will impose on myself some penance ; particularly if I shall have been slow in renewing my spirit, by turning lovingly to God. This I will be able to do even amidst tumult, in my inmost soul, renouncing for it every delight, both spiritual and temporal, and seeking the pleasure of God alone. I will impose some penance on myself, the more so if I shall have failed in charity, either positively, by saying or doing aught, even the most trifling thing, to displease my neighbor ; or negatively, by failing to succor him, especially in his spiritual needs ; and I will impose the penance on myself at once, such as a *Miserere*, or Crosses on the floor, or Acts of Contrition."

From these sentiments, born of a heart desirous to attain to a sublime perfection, to secure which he lost no time and spared no labor, it clearly appears how Just he was with himself, earning many merits for his soul by the practice of the virtues, and consequently meriting that glory which God grants in heaven in proportion to them. He knew he had received from God a soul that he might guard it as a chosen vineyard, and procure for it, as far as laid in himself, eternal salvation ; therefore, he fully esteemed it his duty to further this purpose by doing, not only what was good, but also everything that would tend to strengthen it and make it more perfect, so as to acquire more merit here on earth, and, hereafter, more glory for his soul in heaven. Keeping always in view this obligation, which bound him, as it binds everyone, to save himself, he never turned his attention from it, but, with his mind ever fixed on it, he spared no effort to discharge it. Even while preaching, he never omitted his usual austerities and penances, nor any other exercise of virtue and piety ; nay, ordinarily, he augmented them, saying, with the Apostle St. Paul : "*Ne forte cum aliis prædicaverim, ipse reprobus efficiar*"—"Lest, perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor. ix, 27). Nor was he satisfied to do good for his soul by practicing, at times, a

particular virtue; but he strove constantly to enrich it by the practice of all of them, in the best manner possible; for it is just the thing to procure for ourselves all the spiritual good that we can by the help of grace. A person who was conversant for many years with St. Leonard, and had observed his actions and conduct, attested afterwards that he always admired in him many virtues, and that he possessed every one to such an eminent degree, that he appeared to excel in each of them; adding, moreover (the witness speaks of himself), that, if at times, he felt himself growing lukewarm, merely by reflecting on the life of our Hero, he would be rekindled with the former fervor.

A priest who had long dwelt in Florence with the Saint himself in the Convent del Monte, in his juridical deposition thus concludes: "In fine, I found no fault in this blessed soul of Father Leonard in all the years I spent with him, and can truthfully say of him: '*Videtur in homine isto Adam non peccasse*'—'It looks as if Adam did not sin in this man.' I always saw him full of zeal, charity, humility, indifference to wordly matters, obedience and patience; and I say all this and attest it with my oath as true, and cannot conscientiously say anything to the contrary, according to the lights and practical information I possess concerning this Father. And I believe and say truly, that if he is not a Saint in these, our times, I do not know who else can be one. I, since he has died, feel strongly encouraged to virtue; a great confidence in his virtues is awakened within me; and it seems to me that whatever I ask, through his merits, God is going to grant it to me; and I never speak of him without feeling a special compunction and fervor, even with tears; therefore I believe him to be a Saint, and conclude, weeping and exclaiming: '*Mirabilis Deus in Sanctis suis*'—'God is wonderful in his Saints'" (Ps. lxvii, 36). In a like manner all spoke of him who had ever dealt familiarly with him, agreeing in representing him as a man who, being hungry and thirsty after justice, was tireless in the practice of every virtue and the fulfillment of the duty to aim at perfection and become a Saint, which he felt to be binding upon him. Hence, another, who heard his confessions, said: "By the most particular reflections which I made in observing not only his interior, because of having so long handled his con-

science, but also because I examined minutely his exterior, and not only myself, but other Religious as well, who, at stated times, watched his every action, nothing could we ever discover in him but a beautiful harmony of all the holy virtues." In fine, our Saint was most just with himself, attending constantly and with all his strength to the sanctification of his soul and its adornment with that justice which coincided with the possession of all the virtues. And hence it must be reflected that St. Leonard, living in a Religious Community, where all were well regulated and observant, in which the members expressly aimed at perfection of life, the fervor wherewith he advanced in the ways of the Lord must have been extraordinary and very excellent indeed, if he succeeded in being admired by his own brethren, standing out, alone, among them.

He knew that the Religious Profession entailed on him the duty of aiming at perfection, and that, as this duty was essential to his state, neglect of it or indifference to its daily growth was ceasing to be a Religious; for this reason, too, he exercised himself in the virtues, and grew stronger in them every day; he would thus accomplish all that, in justice, he was bound to do for himself, viz., to become perfect, as he had promised. The fact of having constantly before him this obligation made him feel convinced that it was just the right thing to work for its fulfillment, and that to be indifferent concerning it was a manifest injustice against his own soul, after having promised, in his Profession, to adorn and enrich it with all the virtues. The knowledge, moreover, that the Religious are bound to reach a more sublime perfection than that at which seculars should aim, for they are commanded in the Gospel: "*Estote perfecti, sicut et Pater vester cœlestis perfectus est*"—"Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v, 48), constantly urged him to do great things, and to increase more and more the store of merits for his own soul, deeming this an act of justice due to it. For this reason he practiced all the virtues, as has been said, without cessation or weariness, in a very heroic and excellent manner; and spared neither fatigue, labor nor hardship in order to be just with himself, in acquiring many merits in this life, and much glory in the next, as he was bound

to do. His whole life can easily afford an invincible proof of the truth of this assertion ; because, when we see in it the great zeal he manifested for the sanctification and salvation of others, we must conclude that he spent still greater ardor in doing such justice unto himself.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

How much St. Leonard exercised himself in the virtue of Religion by giving to God the worship in Justice due to Him.

AS the virtue of Justice dictates that we should give to God what is due to Him, viz., that worship and honor, even with the external acts of adoration and homage, wherein the virtue of Religion consists, we will here see with what fervor and exactitude St. Leonard practiced this virtue, paying to God the just tribute of reverence in the best manner possible to him. And, as this can be done chiefly in the Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, in the Divine Office and in Prayer, therefore he resolved to use, in all these, a particular diligence. In Chapter Second of this Part we have seen how great was his devotion towards the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, and with what dispositions and devotion he celebrated the Holy Mass each day ; hence, we will now add only that he never omitted its celebration, giving to God by this means due worship and honor ; never neglecting it because of suffering, fatigue and other inconveniences of long and severe journeys, or very serious and laborious occupations. Once, in 1742, he reached the Convent of St. Bonaventure, in Rome, after having traveled twenty miles on foot, and, though he could not stand from weariness,—without even sitting down to rest awhile,—he went immediately to the sacristy and then celebrated the Holy Mass, as if he had not traveled at all, or had had perfect rest. Another time, in the month of August, after having given the missions in Chianciano, Diocese of Chiusi, he started on a journey, and, with his companions, lost the road, and wandered a long while through some fields, exposed to the

scorching rays of the sun, because of which he felt himself fainting from the excessive heat. After several hours they found the road again, but they were reduced to such a pitiful state, and tormented by such burning thirst, that, nearing a ditch containing some water, his companions began to drink of it, urging the Saint to do likewise, for, from the parched condition of his throat, he could hardly utter a word. But he, as if insensible to such sufferings, answered them, saying: "No, brethren; for a little water I would have to omit the Holy Mass." In fact, as soon as they reached Monte Pulciano, he went at once to the Altar. He was unable, except with great pain, to pronounce the words, because of his parched throat, and when receiving the Sacred Host, he experienced much difficulty in swallowing IT. His companions afterwards wondered how he had been able to terminate that Mass, but he answered, saying: "The suffering is past already, and I have celebrated the Mass," thus giving them to understand that to him who loves nothing is impossible.

To others who also wondered at seeing him celebrate Mass when he was exhausted and half-dead from suffering, he would reply, in wonder: "Know ye not what a Mass is? and how much pleasure and glory it gives to God? and how much He is delighted with the worship we give Him by celebrating one single Mass? In the other Mysteries of our Faith only the memory of what they represent is renewed. On Christmas the Birth of Christ is commemorated; but it is not true that Christ is born on that day. Ascension Day and Pentecost recall the Ascension of our Lord into heaven and the Descent of the Holy Ghost; but it is not true that on those days the Lord ascends into heaven and the Holy Ghost descends visibly upon the earth. The same cannot be said of the Mystery of the Holy Mass; because there is in it, not simply a representation, but the very same Sacrifice (unbloody, though) that was offered on the Cross with the effusion of blood. And shall I, on account of a little weariness, omit to celebrate? The Sacrifice of the Holy Mass which we have in our Religion is a Holy Sacrifice, perfect and altogether complete, whereby every believer highly honors God, protesting, at the same time, his own nothingness, and God's supreme dominion over us. Hence, it is called '*Sacrificium*

Justitiæ'—'a Sacrifice of Justice;' and shall I, for a slight cause, abstain from offering to God such a Sacrifice?" Thus we also find it written in an exhortation which he gave to certain souls, in order to excite in them a fervent devotion to the Holy Mass, of which he goes on to speak, saying: "In the Mass God is honored as He deserves to be, because He is honored by God Himself, that is, by Jesus, Who, placing Himself really on the Altar, by an act of unfathomable submission, adores the Most Holy Trinity, as much as IT is adorable; so that we, who concur with Him in offering this great Sacrifice, give, through Him, an infinite homage and honor to God; and a Christian, when he devoutly assists at Holy Mass, gives to God more honor than do the Angels and the Saints in heaven together, with their adoration; because, after all, they are mere creatures, and their homage is limited and finite; whilst in the Mass Jesus humbles Himself, Whose humiliation has an infinite merit and value. Hence the homage and honor we, through Him, offer to God in the Mass is an infinite homage and honor." Being deeply convinced of these Catholic Truths, St. Leonard, though tired and much fatigued, offered daily the Sacrifice of the Mass, in order to give to God this honor and veneration, and this he did with so much joy of spirit that, after having celebrated Mass, he was more than once heard to exclaim: "O most loving God! why have we not numberless tongues, in order to render to Thee infinite thanks for this great Treasure, which Thou hast given to us in the Holy Mass?"

How much he loved to give to God the worship due Him, viz., to practice the virtue of Religion, he manifested no less in steadily celebrating the Mass than in reciting, by day and by night, the Divine Office, by which a "*Sacrificium Laudis*"—"a Sacrifice of Praise" is offered to God through the lips. Whenever he was in the convent he was prompt to go to choir, at the first sound of the bell, unless detained by obedience, and he would leave everything in order to go and praise God. He thought of the choir as a Paradise on earth, often declaring that "the Office recited in the choir, together with the other friars, was the dearest entertainment of his soul." When he entered the choir he prostrated himself on the floor, and made an intense Act of Adoration

of the Most Holy Trinity and the Divine Sacrament, and by other acts of virtue prepared himself to pay to God that debt with the greatest possible fervor. He declared himself unworthy to stand before the Divine Presence ; much less to praise His Creator with the other Religious ; hence, he begged his Guardian Angel and his Patron Saints to supply his unworthiness, by praising God in his behalf, loving, thanking and blessing Him. Then he entreated the Blessed Virgin that she might vouchsafe to offer, in his name, praises and thanksgivings to the Most Holy Trinity, and, with the deepest humility, he begged also the Most Holy Redeemer to do likewise with His Divine Father. Finally, raising himself up with an act of great confidence in God, he again declared that he intended to join his praises with those which Jesus and Mary, and all the Angels and Saints together gave to God in heaven. After the Office had begun, he was not satisfied with the vocal prayer, but, raising his mind to God, he fixed his thoughts in Him, so that he appeared to be ecstatic, and, the better to facilitate his attention, he had marked at every Psalm some point upon which to meditate ; as has been said elsewhere. He also employed the industry of moving now one and then another finger of his hand, intending thereby to make acts of various virtues, according to the compact previously made with God.

In the Retreat the recitation of the Office takes a long time, and the Psalmody is sung standing, particularly in the night-time, between Matins and Mental Prayer, lasting two hours and a half, and sometimes even three hours ; nevertheless, he was never seen to lean, or show ennui or weariness, not even in his most advanced age ; nay, he would ordinarily remain standing immovably in the midst of the choir, with the novices, almost forgetful of himself. If it happened that he had to recite his Office outside the choir, he would kneel down on the floor and say it with due pause and devotion, making the same actions and meditations that he was wont to make when in the choir. During the missions he recited it at the proper hours, with his companions, in a low voice, but with the same pauses usually made in the choir. And he was so exact in paying to God this tribute of praise, that, even on the last day of his life, though

traveling and grievously sick, he wished to recite all the Divine Office. When he had not the necessary time to make the pauses as he would wish, and to centre his thoughts on the meditations he had fixed upon in his fifth Resolution, then, as it appears from the same, he made these acts implicitly, saying: "I believe, hope and love; I repent and render thanks;" and he meant, in so saying, to make explicit Acts of Faith, Hope, Charity, Contrition and Thanksgiving.

We have seen so far with how much attention and reverence St. Leonard approached the holy Altar, and recited the Divine Office, it remains to be seen, now, with what fervor and assiduity he engaged in prayer, in order, by it, to give to God also the homage due to Him; and, consequently, to exercise himself more and more in the most noble virtue of Religion. He used to call Prayer the ordinary and constant nourishment of his soul; and, in fact, in his every action he kept his mind well fixed in God; and, even in the midst of exterior occupations which might more easily distract him, according to the compact he had previously made with God, his mind did not wander nor divert itself from prayer. At times, saying in his heart: "My Jesus, mercy!" he intended to ask God's grace to live religiously and do in everything His most holy will. Sometimes, moving a finger of his hand, he meant thereby to perform divers acts of virtue; and at others, by different means suggested to him by his fervor, he knew how to keep united with God and wholly employed in adoring, praising and thanking Him. He then would withdraw himself to pray mentally: that is, to meditate upon the eternal truths and to treat alone with God. This he did several times day and night, and with what sentiments of piety and religion he engaged in it, it is not easy to tell. He esteemed so much this manner of praying that, besides spending in meditation whole hours, he was wont to say that "all the troubles and disorders seen in Christendom at this time originated from the want of holy prayer;" and, he added: "If for a quarter of an hour only, every day, a serious thought would be given to the eternal truths, the benefits of God, the obligations of our state, the dangers of this modern mode of living, and, more particularly, to the bitter Passion of our Redeemer, so many scandals, and vanities, and

luxuries, and iniquities would not be seen, nor such dissolute living on the part of the majority of men."

For this reason he loved greatly to live in retirement, solitary in his cell (unless charity or obedience forced him to come out of it), far from the conversation of men, in order to lift up his heart in secret to God, meditating upon His Grandeurs, adoring and thanking Him with internal and external acts. He generally started his prayer from some event in the life of the Redeemer, especially from His Crucifixion, and penetrating it with his thought, he ended it by giving vent to the most tender and burning affections of his heart. Having formed within himself a mental solitude, in which, forgetting all creatures, he sought nothing but God, he treated with Him alone in prayer, and to Him he lovingly clung. He called this solitude and union with God his "little Paradise on earth;" and, consequently, he employed all the time he could spare from his other occupations, in retiring to pray and converse with God. Nay, praying had become so familiar to him that, whether he studied, or attended to other external works, no matter where, or at what time, he never left his mental solitude; therefore, it may be said that he constantly prayed and conversed with God. In this school of prayer he acquired always more and more knowledge of Him, and felt in his heart the desire to please, honor and praise Him, and to cause Him to be honored and praised by others. His whole life, spent and consumed for the honor and glory of God, bears witness to his constant growth. Trained in this school, he understood, as far as permitted in this mortal life, the Divine Mysteries, which he adored with the profoundest homage; he highly venerated the excellence of Mary and of the Saints, professing towards them, as has been shown in its place, a tender devotion. In this manner he rendered to God the worship and honor due to Him, and was enkindled with zeal to venerate Him more and more, and to strive, by every means in his power, to influence others to love and glorify Him also. Through prayer he obtained more light by which to venerate profoundly all things that are related to the same God; in which the virtue of Religion consists.

CHAPTER TWELFTH.

How exact the Obedience of St. Leonard was, and how zealous he was for Justice in regard to his neighbor.

AS the virtue of Justice requires that we should also give to our neighbor all that is due to him, it remains to be seen, here, how St. Leonard fulfilled this obligation; and as Obedience binds the Religious, because of the vow which they make, to fulfill the command of their Superior, therefore, regarding him as the Minister of God, in Whose name he rules, we shall see first whether he acquitted himself of this duty by being obedient to his Superiors; and, afterward, we shall touch briefly on the zeal he showed for Justice towards all, by trying to secure for everyone that which was his due. Our Hero was a most zealous observant of the virtue of Obedience, and loved it so that he never undertook anything independently of his Superiors, and without their approval. Knowing from St. Bernard that "*Obedientia facit Monachos*"—"Obedience makes the Monks," he was dependent upon them and permitted himself to be guided by them in everything, doing with such promptitude whatever they commanded him to do, that nothing more could be desired, even from a novice of a few days. In order that they might feel more at liberty to command what they pleased, he was in the habit of going to their feet, and with humility and resignation he would manifest to them his resolution to obey them willingly and promptly in everything; thus he made them understand that they should freely make use of him without hesitation; because he, being indifferent to everything, wished to depend entirely upon the holy Obedience, and placed himself in their hands to execute whatsoever thing they would require of him. His deeds fully corresponded to these protestations, for, at the slightest signal of his Superiors, he would at once leave what he was doing, taking their nod, as if it had been an order, and going to them at once, as if the order had come immediately from God. It was a cause of wonderment, also, to see with how much care he scanned the disposition of his Superiors, in order

to do, even without their speaking, whatever he understood to be their pleasure and will. When it happened that he was sent to visit someone sick (which was very often the case), or to console one in trouble and affliction, he no sooner had received this command than he immediately went to the convent door, and there waited for the companion assigned to him by the Obedience. He started for the place to which his companion would take him, without even asking about it, but permitting himself to be led like a child. What caused greater edification was the fact that when, on his journeys, he arrived at some convent, where he was to stop for a few hours, and then leave, he would proffer the same obedience to the local Superiors that he would give to his own Guardian. Sometimes, in such places, if it became known that the Saint was to stay even a short while, many pious persons would beg the Superiors of the convent to send him to them, that they might consult him about the state of their souls; and he, though tired from the journey, would comply with alacrity, as soon as the Superiors spoke, even traveling through rain and snow to do their will, without even a word of complaint.

Nor did he show less solicitude in obeying when away from the convent, employed in giving missions; for, if he was requested to go to another place to preach the penance, he never decided the matter by himself; but always referring to the Obedience, he would write about it to his Superiors, and without their permission he did not move a step. When he received their letters, he fulfilled so exactly what was enjoined upon him, as to give clearly to understand that he had no other will than that of his Superiors. Though he noticed the abundant fruit that he produced in the souls by his preaching, still he declared that "if Obedience ordered him to omit entirely the missions, not only promptly, but with a cheerful spirit, he would obey." He was accustomed to say that "Obedience is a virtue very pleasing to God, and that without it every other good deed loses its lustre and is turned into a fault." Often, whilst he exercised the apostolic ministry, he received an order not to continue it in the neighboring towns of the same diocese, but to return in order to begin his labors in some far-away place and, afterwards, to go

back, by the same route, to the place whence he had started; and he, notwithstanding the unfavorable seasons and the great hardship of journeying barefooted, without making use of any subterfuge or even saying a word, left or returned according to his orders. To a Religious who, on the occasion of one of these journeys, wrote to him to conform himself to the will of his Superiors, he answered thus: "I allow myself to be tossed hither and thither by the Divine Providence; for, by being obedient, I am sure that I make no mistake." To another who, likewise, wrote to him, pitying him for the great inconvenience he underwent in being ordered forward and backward, he said, facetiously: "I willingly act the coachman, by going to and fro, and in this manner I earn my bread." Finally, someone exhorted him by letter modestly to explain to his Superiors the difficulties which he experienced, being now old, to execute some of their orders; but he gave him to understand as follows: "My Father, we must obey. Your Reverence touches me on the most delicate point of my conscience; for, in fifty years of Religion, I never had occasion to confess that I had sinned against holy Obedience; think ye whether I wish to embroil my conscience, now that I am old!"

The love he bore to this virtue of Obedience can be argued also from the great esteem in which he held the person of his Superiors, from the reverence he exhibited to them, and with which he was wont to discourse about this same virtue. He used to say: "In Obedience, besides the other virtues, the theological virtues are practiced in a particular manner;" and he gave the reason for this, as follows: "Because the motive of religious Obedience being to obey the Superiors as God Himself, it follows that, by fulfilling the Obedience perfectly, one exercises Faith in an excellent manner, acknowledging God Himself in the person of the Superior, Whose place he holds, and from Whom comes to him the authority to order or prohibit whatever he deems more suitable for the good reputation of his subjects. Hope, too, is practiced; as one places himself wholly in the hands of him who rules him, trusting that he will be directed with special assistance by the Divine Providence; for, having given up in everything his own will, he allows himself to be regulated by the

will of others, feeling sure that he will be directed in the manner most suitable to his own spiritual profit. Finally, Charity also is exercised by loving the Divine will, and without in the least departing from what God disposes through the Superiors, willingly embracing and promptly executing whatever is pleasing to God." He conducted himself according to this principle, and held Obedience in such great esteem that whatever was requested of him, no matter how hard, difficult and serious, this was his answer: "When it is a question of acting according to the Obedience, let even life go. I would consider myself highly fortunate if, through Obedience, I could die." Nor was the esteem that he entertained for his Superiors any less, for he regarded them as God Himself; and no matter who might be the Guardian, whether old or young, whether learned or not, he saw in him the character of the Superior, and this was sufficient for him to form of him the highest regard, and to reverence in him that office which put him in God's place, speaking to him always with humility and respect. When requested, as he oftentimes was, by distinguished personages, and even sometimes by cardinals, to perform special works, he, though old and in the last years of his life, would answer, with humility, pointing to the Father Guardian, if the latter were present: "Eminence, behold my God on earth. I can answer neither yes nor no. Since I have made my Religious Profession, no will has been left to me but that of my Superiors, who rule over me in God's place."

He entertained such a high esteem for his Superiors that he not only spoke to them with reverence, as we have said, but listened with attention and eyes cast down to whatever they told him, and to all their commands. If asked by them concerning anything, he would make known his opinion without prejudice and with all sincerity, and then leave the matter to their judgment for final decision. He asked the Superior's permission, according to the rule of the Religion,(1) for everything, no matter how trifling; and he observed even the smallest practices of Obedience with exactness, never seeking any exemption or dispensation whatever. Hence, it was very edifying to see an old monk, venerable with age and his great merits, kneel-

(1) Religious Order.

ing down before his Superior and humbly asking permission to go out of the convent, totally indifferent as to what companion might be assigned to him for the occasion ; and again, asking the same permission when he wished to answer a letter, to change his habit, or do other like things ; and then to kiss the ground, as if he were a novice. But, more surprising still, when he passed before the cell of the Guardian, he uncovered his head, and, pausing, made a profound bow. When asked why he did that, he answered : "This is the place where my Superior dwells, and, therefore, it is worthy of all reverence, being the home of him who takes the place of God." He never inquired nor sought the reason of any command, and reprehended those who did not obey, until they had first investigated the motives of the orders given them by their Superiors ; hence, he said, concerning this matter : "Provided that what is commanded is not an offense against God, for the rest we should bow our head and seek no further." And to a Religieuse who propounded to him some doubts concerning Obedience, he answered : "Fix this truth well in your heart : the Superioress may err, and, as a matter of fact, she does err sometimes in giving orders ; but the subject who acts with a sincere desire to please God, never errs in obeying." Being convinced of this, he sometimes omitted and at other times undertook certain good works, according to the pleasure of his Superiors ; and, though he was fully determined to observe the Resolutions already spoken of, with the approbation of his Guardian and of his confessor ; still, if one of these, to try him, ordered him to omit them, or to moderate some of them, without giving the least sign of repugnance or regret, he obeyed promptly.

In one of the Resolutions, near the end, we read this, by the way : "I beg of my Spiritual Father, that, after having read these my Resolutions, if he so deems before God, he give me his blessing, that I may do everything with the merit of holy Obedience." He addressed the same prayers to the one who had charge of his soul, pleading with him to bless these Resolutions, and sign his name to them, after having approved them. Often he would say that he wished to permit himself to be moved like a staff by the hands of the person who stood in the place

of God, obeying in everything that was not sin. He exhorted others likewise to conduct themselves in the same manner, and left this written in a letter directed to a Religious: "Whatever thing may be enjoined on us by holy Obedience, let us throw ourselves into the sea of Divine Providence; let us leave the Superiors, high and low, to do whatever they wish with us. Behold the way to live in peace and die in peace; and let us feel sure that, until we Religious place ourselves totally on the pivot, viz., in the disposition of being turned and revolved on every side by the Obedience, we will never enjoy perfect peace; whilst, as soon as we shall have made this generous resolution,—Lord, behold me, at sea; guide Thou me; I am ready for every kind of Obedience, even, though, I should have to end my life by it,—then we shall at once be in a sea of peace." All local Superiors who had him for a subject in their convent, unanimously attest that they always had cause to admire him for his obedience, even in the least things, no less than in the most difficult and weighty ones. Hence it was that, in order not to lose the merit of doing all things in obedience to a Superior, he avoided the Guardianships and preferred to remain subject to the order of others. Hence, too, it proceeded that, entertaining the greatest respect for the prelates in whose dioceses he exercised the apostolic ministry, he depended in all things upon their resolutions, and was likewise obsequious to the pastors, kissing their hands, and taking directions from them as to how to conduct the missions with greater fruit for the souls. More still, he even obeyed the lay brother who accompanied and assisted him in time of the missions, and, if he said to him do this or the other thing, without uttering a word, he would do everything exactly as he was told.

But inasmuch as the perfection of Obedience consists not only in obeying promptly, but also cheerfully, so our Saint, in practicing it with promptness, showed also the joy of his spirit in his countenance. "In obeying, he used to say under various circumstances, I am sure not to err: hence, I rejoice more when I make an act of obedience than if I were to convert the whole world." He often had this saying on his lips: "Our duty is to obey;" and, looking upon every order of the Superiors as the most useful and profitable to himself, without seeking any

further, as he said, he at once executed it with diligence and cheerfulness, and, deeming every delay in obeying to be culpable, he added that "on account of this delay a great share of the merit is lost, and the first-fruits are given to the devil." Finally, having resolved and declared that he willed to be obedient even unto death, he fulfilled this resolution in his last journey to Rome from Bologna. The Holy Father had enjoined on him, before leaving Rome, that he should return there in the coming November, and had also written to him: "We hope you will soon be in Rome;" he, therefore, left Bologna on the 15th of November. He was taken sick on the way, and, though asked to rest in several places, he refused, because he wished to continue his journey towards Rome, in order to obey the Sovereign Pontiff, as he explained to his companion, saying to him: "You know, Brother, that His Holiness, upon my leaving Rome, ordered me to return to that city in November. You know that he wrote to me in Barbarolo: 'We hope that you will soon be in Rome;' and when a Pope says 'We hope,' I take it as if he said 'We command.' My conscience would be troubled too much, were I, on account of the ailment which overtook me, to exempt myself from performing the obedience. Let us go to Rome, then; and if I die, it will be a particular grace that God shall have granted to me, the grace so much wished for by me, to die in the actual exercise of obedience." In fact, a few hours after having arrived in Rome, as it has already been related in Part First, he did rest in the Lord, enjoying the consolation of having been obedient even unto death.

St. Leonard practiced Justice towards his neighbor by obeying his Superiors, but was likewise zealous to promote this virtue in behalf of others, by striving to suppress usury, by checking quarrels, and by seeing to it that everyone had what was due to him. He often came across poor people oppressed by the avaricious, who, by unlawful contracts, which had become customary, squeezed out their very blood; he, therefore, moved to compassion for them, and burning with zeal for Justice, inveighed against the injustice, and strove very hard to eradicate it. He would show the deformity and gravity of it, teach how to make

lawful contracts, without trespassing the limits of justice and oppressing the neighbor,—thundering, at the same time, against those who, for a sordid gain and love of money, are indifferent to the loss of their souls and of God. In speaking upon this matter he had no regard for persons, reprehending with apostolic liberty the frauds of the poor and the extortions of the rich. He preached against whatever offended justice by usury or thefts, or by not paying just wages, or in any other manner whatsoever, speaking with such clearness and vehemence as to make it evident how much he loved this virtue and hated its opposite vice. It happened, sometimes, that a nobleman would tax our missionary with imprudence, though, in his sermons, he only spoke in general; but he, when told of it, would say from the platform that he was fighting to exterminate vice, whether it was in the barn of the farmer, or in the cabinet of a statesman, covered with rags or adorned with brocade; and that, being employed as an Apostolic Laborer, and equally debtor to all, he wished to remind all alike of their duties. Nay, he was so far from growing cold in the love of Justice, that when he found that anyone disapproved of his invectives, especially against the defrauders of wages, he rather grew more inflamed with zeal to bring the guilty ones to the fulfillment of their duty. He would often express himself in these precise words: "They will say that Brother Leonard is rude, in so far that he shows partiality in reprehending the injustice of defrauding workmen of their wages—a sin which has, in these days, become common; they will add that he is ignorant, because he does not understand that people cannot disgrace their state by curtailing the expenditures which their condition requires. Let them say what they like; I would betray my apostolic ministry, I would betray their souls, if, seeing them act contrary to Justice, by a too damnable silence, I should not remind them of all their duties, place them under their eyes, and tell them of what numerous and grievous sins they make themselves guilty in not fulfilling them. Therefore, that they talk, it matters little. Let them even beat me; I care not. What I desire, and to obtain which I would even shed my blood, is, that Justice be observed—a virtue too necessary, and for the want of which many souls are unhappily damned."

Thus was St. Leonard zealous for Justice, preaching against its violators, and impressing strongly upon all that each should be given his due, just as he practiced alike with the equals and the inferiors, honoring and respecting these also, according to the teaching of St. Paul, "*honore invicem prævenientes*," and being careful to avoid giving anyone displeasure or offense in any manner whatsoever.

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

How much St. Leonard loved the virtue of Temperance.

TEMPERANCE is that virtue whereby the appetites are subjected to the reason and to God. It is, then, the more perfect when it causes one to abstain not only from unlawful things for virtue's sake, which every Christian is bound to do, but also to deprive one's self of the lawful ones, as those souls do who try to perfect themselves in the way of the Lord. Hence it is that St. Leonard, aspiring to this perfection, practiced, exactly, all the other virtues in the highest degree, in order to reach it, and also practiced Temperance in a heroic degree, mortifying his senses by denying them the use of even those things which he might have lawfully granted to them. Holding as a maxim that a "Yes" to the taste, and a "No" to the pain, would prevent a soul from remaining united with God, he declared that he wished with a generous heart to go forward and meet all the mortifications, big and small, and to wage a relentless war against his senses, his faculties and his passions. Hence, he was always severe with himself and abhorred whatever might have afforded him any earthly pleasure, only feeling satisfied and contented when he mortified himself either by afflicting his body or by depriving himself of something, even though it were lawful and honest. Through the Divine grace he acquired such a dominion over his passions that he seemed to live in the body as if outside the body, and he was so far from yielding to it that he had no other thought than to mortify and punish it.

He was never seen in anger, nor with a mien that might portend displeasure or internal perturbation; but, no matter what happened to him, being in everything his own master, he was always calm and imperturbable; because he received everything as favorable to himself, and as coming from the hand of God. From this, likewise, it proceeded that he was never depressed in spirit, and, if any of his companions appeared to be so, because of fatigue or some other cause, he would say to them: "Let those be sad who are in the state of sin. We, who are laboring for the glory of God, must be cheerful, knowing that we serve a Lord who counts our very steps, to give us for them, at the proper time, a very great recompense in Paradise." He arrived at this tranquillity of spirit by vigorously moderating his faculties; for he did not permit his memory to dwell upon anything, except what might be for his own spiritual profit, or the glory and pleasure of God. He subjected his intellect to the judgment of others. When, on any occasion, he had to make known his opinion, he expressed it with moderation, and, without showing the least attachment to his own view, cheerfully bowed to the opinion of others. He was ever the implacable enemy of his own will, contradicting it in whatever was not comformable to that perfection to which he aspired; hence, when he was encouraging a Religieuse to do what he did, he said to her: "Take aim at your will, and make it bend in every which way."

Nor was his Temperance less in restraining his bodily senses, because he practiced it so much in restraining the faculties of his soul. In the numerous journeys which he made through various sections and provinces, he never allowed his eyes to look upon any rare or curious thing which might be met with; nay, even while walking through the country districts, he did not permit his eyes to notice their beauty, keeping them fixed upon the ground or raised to heaven. When he walked through villages and towns, his modesty, joined to a recollection of mind totally absorbed in God, was such that he hardly perceived anyone he met, nor did he know, very often, by which road he had come. In the convent itself he did not recognize the Religious he would meet, because he went on his way with his eyes cast down, and with such modesty, that they were edified and touched by it.

By watchfulness over his hearing he shunned all useless and idle discourses; and if it happened, sometimes, that such would be introduced in his presence, he, in a nice way, either began to talk on profitable topics, or, taking leave, he turned from the company.

Greater still was his care to guard his tongue, not uttering words except to promote God's glory or procure the salvation of souls. He was accustomed to say that "the tongue is the pulse of the heart, and that, in order to know the spirit of a Religious, it suffices to speak with him; because, if he puts forward holy discourses, that is a sign that he has God in his heart; otherwise he is a hollow reed, wholly given to levities. Hence, he imposed on himself a rule, which he inviolably kept: "I will not waste time in talking, and I will not talk except from necessity or for charity." For this reason he seldom spoke, and generally led a retired and solitary life in his cell, whence he did not issue except to fulfill his duties to God and his neighbors. During the time of the missions, in order not to commit faults by the tongue, he was even more retired than when he was in the convent; and, if convenience obliged him sometimes to take notice of compliments, to which he was always averse, he observed the Rule he himself gave to a Religieuse, saying to her: "I wish to impart to you a beautiful secret, whereby, in your conversations, you may steal Jesus' heart: Be always the first to introduce holy discourses, but do it skillfully. Enter, occasionally, into the discourses of others, but in order to turn from them to your subject, saying something about God in a nice way, and thus you will compel Jesus to remain with you always." He weighed his words well, even while speaking with the Religious; and, during the missions, in the evening after supper, he was in the habit of leaving his companions, so as not to have occasion to talk, and of withdrawing to his room, where he kept perfect silence. In one word, he was so careful about guarding his tongue that, at noon and in the evening, he used to examine himself diligently about this; and, when he found he had failed somewhat, he would at once do penance for it, never ceasing to say that "the tongue is a strong enemy, which,

unless mortified and checked continually, becomes insolent and noxious."

But inasmuch as the virtue of Temperance principally consists in moderating the senses of taste and touch, having spoken before of this moderation during the course of his life, we will here speak of it briefly, reserving to ourselves to tell of his Chastity in the following chapter. First of all as to eating: he was so rigorous in regard to granting any satisfaction to his palate, that many wondered at it, being unable to understand how, while mortifying it constantly with so many penances and fasts, he could endure under the weight of such great hardships, especially during his old age. For the space of forty-four years he never partook of meat, eggs, fish, nor salted meat, eating only soup and salad. He did not change this mode of living even on the principal feasts of the year, being satisfied, even then, with the soup alone and some fruit, if there was any for the Religious Community. It may be truthfully asserted that his life was a constant fast; for, besides the six customary months of fasting in the Retreat, during the other six months St. Leonard would take, at dinner, the soup only; and at supper the first thing that was brought to him, which ordinarily was the salad with some fruit, though he deprived himself even of the latter when it happened to be the first of the season. On other days he would eat only part of them, offering the rest as a present to the Holy Infant Jesus. Not seldom he poured some cold water into the soup he was eating, hiding this mortification with some pretext; and he never put salt in his dishes, though they might consist of raw herbs, eating them thus insipid, in order to mortify himself the more. He abhorred eating sweets, saying "they were not intended for a poor person, as he was, and that neither oats nor caresses, but straw and blows were due the little donkey of his body." For this reason he never made use of lemons, oranges, sauces, or whatever might stimulate or satisfy the appetite.

He was likewise temperate as to drinking, for he never fully quenched his thirst, and his ordinary drink was more water than wine, that is, colored water. He was never heard to complain of his food, no matter how it was seasoned, and he was wont to

say that "the lack of desire to mortify one's taste is the moth that prevents so many religious persons from progressing in the spiritual life;" and then he added: "they master themselves in everything else; but in this they are lost; and the fervor they conceived at prayer in the choir cools down altogether in the refectory." That he himself might not fall into this disorder, he seemed to measure every mouthful, fearing to give too much pleasure to his palate; and he was often seen to weep while he was calm, from which everybody understood that he was in body at the table, but in mind with God, and that he was fulfilling that Resolution he had made: "Now and forever I renounce every sensible taste in eating, seeking therein the pleasure of God alone."

But, if he was so temperate while in the convent, he was the more so when he was out in the different towns to give the missions; for, though he labored constantly, being always hard at work and in action, still he would begin and continue his work fasting, being satisfied to eat only in the evening. With his charity and discretion he allowed his companions to partake of some refreshment in the morning; but, as to himself, he was satisfied with some sage tea, which he made use of to preserve his voice, though, later on, fearing that this drink was too delicate, he changed it to a cup of wormwood tea. For a whole year he tasted nothing else in the morning but this; till his companion having informed the Superior-General of the fact, he was ordered by him to take a small piece of bread with a cup of wine, which he did promptly and continued to do until his death. In the evening, though tired and worn out, he partook only of a salad and some light soup, with oil condiment; and if his companion, moved to compassion for him, seasoned it sometimes a little better than usual, when he discovered the fact, he would stop eating it, saying that it was not a food suitable for his stomach. All those who were ever with him on such occasions unanimously asserted that his abstinence at his meals was excessive. When, in 1742, by order of the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, he was compelled to moderate the severity of his rule, in obedience he added to the usual supper a small portion of vegetables, but never consented to taste any sort of meat or milk-food. He

could never be induced, either in the convent or outside, to eat the most trifling thing before or after the usual hour of meals; and in his long summer journeys, though often burning with thirst, his companions could never succeed in getting him to drink, at least, a little water with which to refresh himself. He would at once answer them: "It is not to my advantage to lose some greater degree of merit for Paradise by a little water;" or else: "It is not much for me to suffer a little thirst, since my Saviour suffered such great thirst for me upon the Cross on Calvary."

Finally, how much the Temperance of our Hero shone in treating with asperity the sense of touch, can be seen first from the mortifications and ill-treatment he inflicted persistently on his body. It would be necessary to recount the story of his whole life in order to present all the facts, but I will here touch only upon a few of the many rigors which he underwent in the exercise of this virtue. He wore on his bare body, daily, for several hours, an iron girdle (cilicium), which he ordinarily put on in the morning, that he might celebrate Mass while wearing that instrument of torture. He never gave up this practice, whether he was in the convent, or journeying to give the missions, being accustomed to say that "our body is a colt, which, if not constantly kept in check, runs off when we least expect it, and makes us fall into precipices." Besides the frequent disciplines, by which he used to say that he was asking of God alms for some soul, scourging himself publicly with iron slats, even two and three times during each sermon, he also, every night, secretly made a terrible butchery of his body. If he happened to be in the house of lay people, fearing discovery, he made use of a discipline of small chains with sharp points, which he carried with him in his journeys that he might scourge himself with freedom and with secrecy. But all saw the wounds he inflicted on his body when on the platform, by the fierce strokes he gave himself, and they saw the blood gushing forth from them, and, after his death, they also saw the scars and the marks on his body. When he was obliged to spend the night in the house of a benefactor, after he had thus ill-treated his body with fasts, ciliciums and disciplines, he would grant it a little rest by a short sleep, lying upon some

boards and placing under his head a piece of wood for a pillow. Sometimes, on such occasions, his bed was a box, or even the bare ground, but he would arrange the bed as though he had slept in it. Not until three years before his death did he bring himself by obedience to lie down on a straw bed. During the most excessive rigors of winter, partly because he wore an old and worn-out habit, and partly because he always walked absolutely barefooted, as has been said several times, he could be seen shivering all over with cold, yet he very seldom approached the fire. If, at any time, he went near it, he withdrew in the shortest time, reproaching himself, and calling himself "poltroon." He would humbly answer anyone who importuned him to warm himself: "The more we give to our body, the more it takes; and as we train it, so it continues." In this heroic manner did St. Leonard practice the virtue of Temperance; and because through it, principally, the disordered appetites of concupiscence are checked, therefore we shall here speak of his Chastity, showing what a zealous and watchful custodian of it he was.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

Of the spotless Chastity of St. Leonard.

As our Hero had vowed Chastity to God by a solemn vow in his religious profession, so he was most faithful in keeping it, preserving himself till death spotless and free from everything that in any manner whatsoever might stain it. Nay, not only did he guard with great jealousy this most noble virtue, after having vowed it before the sacred Altar; but even in his younger and more dangerous years, and when in the world itself, he preserved it intact and spotless. From his very earliest years, as we have seen in Chapter First of Part First, he proved himself a great lover of Chastity, saving himself, and exhorting also his companions to save themselves, by a swift flight from a serious danger with which it was threatened. From that time

on he was so modest in his looks and in his words that, both in his birthplace and in Rome, all who observed him or conversed with him revered him as an angel clothed in human flesh. To modesty he added penance and prayer, practicing, even whilst still a layman, both of these virtues, as we have seen, and exhorting his contemporaries to profess a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, in order to obtain the virtue of purity, which pleases her so much. When he arrived at the age at which it usually meets the greatest dangers, he increased his cautiousness in order to preserve it; hence, he associated only with spiritual persons or those of good morals. Having made the choice of a good confessor, under his direction he frequented the Sacraments, another means most efficacious to preserve chastity, of which he became so enamored that, entering Religion, he promised it to God by a solemn vow. Afterwards he felt such joy for having made this vow that, often thanking the Lord for this grace, he gently complained because he had not had this knowledge when he was a child, adding, that if he had it, he would have wished to bind himself to Him from that time by so holy a bond. He expressed these sentiments not only privately but also publicly in his sermons. In the sermon on "Impurity" he used to say, and we now read it in his own handwriting: "I turn to Thee, O my dear Jesus, and with tears in my eyes I thank Thee for having placed me in this state, and for having given me the grace of making the vow of perpetual chastity. Why, O my Jesus, didst Thou not give me light to know such a great virtue the first time my mother wrapped me up in swaddling clothes? Alas! from that very time I wish I could have made so beautiful a vow! Oh, what joy, what Paradise is that of a soul living chaste and pure!" For the faithful observance of this vow, he begged earnestly and constantly of God to vouchsafe to grant him an angelic purity, and feared so much lest he might, in some way, even the most trifling, tarnish its brightness, that he also wished to be free from any, even the slightest, inclination towards the opposite vice.

To this burning desire he joined the remedies, opportune and necessary, to maintain himself chaste; and in this regard he was wont to say that "where this matter is concerned, the

good will is of little avail, if everything is not put into practice which is necessary in order not to contract any stain." Hence it is that he, with all his might, fled from every occasion that even from afar might excite in him a thought that was not pure. He dealt with women only from mere necessity, and with his eyes always down and fixed on the ground, quickly finishing his talk with them, even if they were grand and titled dames, as often happened. Though his manners were pleasant and cultured, with women he was serious and reserved, abstaining from anything that might indicate tenderness or sympathy; hence, with all seriousness and modesty, he delivered to them those prudent admonitions and gave them those wise counsels which he deemed useful and suitable for their souls. When his companion would sometimes say that it was necessary, when conversing with ladies given to piety and a spiritual life, to take more time and not to be so harsh, lest they might think him rude, he would answer: "Brother, if they shall say that Brother Leonard is ill-mannered, rude and uncivil, it matters not. In the pursuit of purity, whatever caution and severity one may use is never too much." At other times he would say: "Don't you know, Brother, that the more a lily is shielded by thorns, the more secure from harm it is? If these ladies feel wounded by my harsh words, they will themselves be edified, and holy purity will, moreover, be the better guarded, which is the thing that, above all, matters to me." During all the time he was speaking with women he pondered on some good thought, which he had already aroused in his mind; and he used to say, for the instruction of others, that "a Religious, when, of necessity, he speaks with any woman, must imitate those who deal with the pest-stricken. They, when unable to flee from these infected people, keep in their hands, whilst talking to them, some perfume to protect themselves from every pestilential and malign breath. Likewise the Religious, being obliged to treat with women, must make use of the perfume of some good maxim, well rooted in the heart, and revolve it in his mind, whilst conversing with them."

He used the same harshness and seriousness with women, perhaps even more so, in hearing their Sacramental Confessions; for, speaking of so holy a ministry, he thus would express him-

self: "The Confessional is a sacred place; it is a salutary bath, approaching which one must purpose to cleanse his soul from every stain; hence, no other conversation must be permitted therein but that only which tends to so holy an object as is that of purifying the soul. Consequently the sacred minister must there use such words, and regulate with such care all his conduct, that, in healing the sores of others, he may not contract any himself." In pursuance of this maxim, whenever he heard the confessions of women, he never turned his face to them, and, when he had listened with a recollected mien to all that was required for the right administration of the Sacrament, and had given that advice which the case demanded, he would not listen to a word that did not appertain to the confession, but would dismiss them. He wished to have a curtain in his confessional, that he might draw it across when he was in it, so that he would not see the women kneeling in front of it, awaiting their turn to confess; and, before entering the Sacred Tribunal, fearing lest the devil might excite some impure imagination in his mind, he would earnestly recommend himself to his Guardian Angel, begging him to free him from such a danger. He took great care that purity should shine during the missions; and to this end he expressly forbade women entering the house where he was stopping. If there were women in the same house where he stopped, he gave them to understand, as soon as he arrived, that they were not to put their foot in the rooms appointed for the missionaries; and he behaved towards them in such a manner that, outside of the confessional, he did not speak at all to them, except for most urgent reasons.

He always kept the Resolution never to travel alone, not even from the house to the church, or *vice versa*, and watched that this rule also should be observed by his companions. When it happened that he or any of them was called upon to hear the confession of a sick woman, he wished to be accompanied by another priest, or some other serious person, who, during the confession, would remain in a place whence he could see the confessor and the penitent. When anyone wondered at this great caution of his, he used to answer: "Though the virtue of Chastity is necessary to every person, especially a sacred one,

it is necessary in a more particular manner to him who is engaged in bringing souls to God ; because if but a speck appears therein contrary to it, it is enough, aside from all other things, to prevent all the fruit which one aims at in the souls. It is not sufficient for a missionary to be pure in the eyes of God ; but he must also appear such in the eyes of the world. Hence, it is always well for him to have a witness of his actions." For the same end, whilst traveling during the missions from one place to another, he would never allow a woman to accompany him ; holding as a maxim that "a Religious must not only flee the evil, but also everything that the world, ever ready to think evil, especially of Religious persons, may look upon as evil." Neither did he permit any person, much less a woman, to touch his hands ; and, when in the towns through which he passed, many people crowded around him to kiss them, he offered to all his habit or his cloak, and, without even stopping, as if distracted, he would pursue his journey. Nay, he wore the cloak, with great inconvenience, even in the hottest season, and when asked, more than once, why he did not relieve himself of it, he, in all sincerity, answered : "These people, in their simplicity, wish to kiss my hand, and often some simple-minded women come forward, and, though I keep my hands inside my sleeves, they strive to take them ; which grieves me very much, for I do not deem it proper for holy purity that a Religious should permit himself, even under the plea of devotion, to be touched in the hands, particularly by women. Now, since I wear the cloak, they kiss this holy habit, which I am not worthy to wear, and thus I remain free from the danger of having my hands touched by anyone."

Instructing a Religieuse as to this matter of purity, he thus wrote to her : "If you love to live a life of perfect chastity, here is the way : practice Retirement, Modesty and Mortification, and you will be chaste." And what he recommended to others, he practiced himself with even greater exactness. He lived so retired that, whilst living in the convent, he did not even go down to the garden to get fresh air ; and when out of it, he never left the room assigned to him, except to go to the church or to perform some deed of charity. He often had the following words on his lips : "A Religious who loves not retire-

ment may easily encounter something whereby his purity, if not harmed, at least may be in danger of being dimmed ; and to be indifferent to meeting such dangers, because not desiring to be deprived of a certain pleasure, is a sign that purity is either already lost or in danger of being lost.'' His modesty was so great that, walking always with his eyes cast down, and with a singular quietness of his arms and steps, he breathed holiness in his entire deportment, because of which many declared that they felt contrite upon only seeing him ; and others, who communed with him for many years, asserted that they never noticed in him a word, action or gesture in which did not shine an edifying modesty. In giving advice, particularly to the young people, he said : ''Unless you are modest, you will never be chaste. The sins against holy purity generally find their first cause in lack of modesty.'' Of the mortification of his body, another means necessary to guard Chastity, we have said enough in the preceding chapter ; here we will only add that, on account of his very heavy labors and the ill-treatment he used toward himself, it was deemed miraculous, by physicians and others, that he lived. In fact, the following maxim was deeply impressed upon his heart, and he very often expressed it in his discourses, viz., ''in order that a colt may not kick, he must be deprived of his oats and treated to the stick ; and, likewise, abstinence and ill-treatment must be meted out to our body, so that, being tamed by mortification, it may not dare to kick back against the spirit.''

To all these means necessary to keep one's self chaste, he added the other most necessary one also—prayer. He was convinced that man could not by his strength alone guard such a beautiful treasure, and would often say : ''By ourselves we can do nothing ; and particularly in this matter we stand in need of the special assistance of God.'' In order to obtain this assistance, he prayed continually to God, asking Him that he might observe with all exactitude the vow of Chastity ; and, if he foresaw even from afar any danger of a surprise, he at once had recourse to his ejaculation : ''My Jesus, mercy !'' But, though he made use of these and other means in order to keep unsullied the lily of purity, still he did not trust in the least to himself ; and, when at times he exhorted his companions or others to be watchful in

guarding this delicate virtue, he thus expressed himself: "My brethren, I, though old, am very much afraid in regard to this matter, and dare not raise my eyes from the ground, knowing that many men who were previously advanced in virtue and sanctity, indeed, by a surprise suddenly fell miserably." At other times he would say: "Let us flee, brethren, and recommend ourselves to God; for there is nothing to be so jealously guarded as purity. The devil does not sleep, and will spare neither old nor young, neither Religious nor laymen; and if a Religious, through his misfortune, falls, because he falls from a sublime place, his fall is over a precipice." For his own greater security, he bound himself to tell minutely to his Spiritual Father whatever might happen contrary to this virtue, though there was no shadow of sin in it, and he exhorted others to do likewise, saying: "Ah! if you only knew how much strength and daring the devil loses when he sees himself found out, and knows that we, manifesting sincerely his suggestions to our confessor, permit ourselves to be guided by his wise counsels. Seeing his mean deceptions laid bare, he quickly flies, full of confusion; but if we remain shut up and allow his evil suggestions to lurk within our heart without confessing them, because we flatter ourselves that there being no sin we can pass them in silence, it enhances his boldness and he obtains renewed strength to tempt and conquer us." One who had his conscience in his hands, through hearing his general confession during the last years of his life, thus deposes and testifies: "I hold it for certain that his most beautiful crowns in heaven will be those of holy chastity and purity of heart—the vigilance over himself at the least shadow of danger, in order to keep himself immaculate and most pure, he having been most scrupulous."

Finally, how much he loved chastity can be argued from the great fervor and zeal with which he attacked the contrary vice in his sermons. The number of dissolute persons who, moved by his preaching, left their old, filthy habits to undertake a chaste and exemplary life cannot be counted. Wherever he went to give the missions, abundant fruits of this kind were gathered, as we have already related in Part First. Sometimes with convincing arguments, sometimes with hot invectives, and then again by

taking up the Crucifix, and often by resorting to the discipline, he strove, beating himself fiercely, to stir up the incontinent ones and bring all, according to their respective state, to observe chastity. He raised his voice with great vehemence and apostolic freedom against all the enemies of it, against the abuses of love-making, immodest familiar conversations, lascivious and improper talking, against the reading of obscene and profane books, the frequenting of immoral theatres, and the keeping of immodest pictures in the houses ; against women's vanity, against balls, and whatever is, generally, an incentive to offend and stain this angelic virtue. He proved himself always the implacable enemy of all these things, publicly inveighing against them, to the end that the people might guard against them, as snares laid by the devil to allure souls to sin and consequently to perdition. Nor did God permit this zeal for Chastity to remain without fruit ; besides the innumerable conversions, even of *meretrices*, through his influence, in many places, the theatres were closed, comedies were forbidden, the carnival was omitted, love-making interdicted, and, suddenly the most wonderful and prodigious changes took place ;—all consequences of the hatred St. Leonard bore to the vice of impurity and its incentives, and of the love he cherished in his heart for the virtue of Chastity.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

Of the heroic Fortitude of spirit of St. Leonard.

WE shall consider this virtue in so far as it renders a soul strong and superior to all the obstacles which oppose our perfection in regard to God, making us accept, with imperturbability and courage, as coming from Him, all difficulties and trials ; and we will here see, briefly, how strong this virtue was in St. Leonard, and consequently with what great fortitude he was endowed. This appears evident from the whole course of his life, which was full of obstacles and dangers that he

had to meet and overcome. It was, in truth, very wonderful to see how he undertook great and difficult things for the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbors, without ever faltering or losing courage, and without showing, no matter how hard they were, either faintness of heart or lack of strength to begin, continue and bring them to perfection. We would never finish were we to relate here all the instances in which he set about great and difficult undertakings by making use of a heroic Fortitude. We shall simply mention a few, from which, together with the various great and unlooked-for difficulties that he met with, we shall gather how much this virtue endowed and enriched his soul.

In the first place, his courage shone forth in establishing in his Retreats the observance of all the Rules and Constitutions, inculcating at times the exact fulfillment of these, even in small things, and resisting the opposition of those who looked askance upon those Retreats. Hence, whenever he had occasion to speak about them, he used to say: "The Retreat is my mother, and I would deem myself happy if I could lay down my life to maintain and defend it." We have seen in Part First what labor he sustained to establish it in Florence—that of the Monte—and how many difficulties, caused by those who opposed it, he overcame. In fact he had to endure most bitter displeasure from his own friends and from strangers, which made him say: "Let them abuse me and even cudgel me, if they see fit, I willingly endure everything, provided the Rules are kept and our institute preserved in its rigor." On this account he undertook repeated journeys, even at the most inconvenient seasons, always barefooted, from Florence to Rome and from Rome to Florence, never losing courage, no matter what adversity or opposition he met with. Nay, the more difficulties and obstacles he met, the better, full of boldness, did he overcome them, saying that "he was always ready and prepared to suffer more for the glory of God and the support of the institution; and was willing to give, for the same object, even his blood, if it became necessary." Many other times, especially when Guardian of these Retreats, he proved himself armed with fortitude in reprehending with holy liberty, and without respect to persons, the faulty ones and the transgressors of even the most trifling rules. He showed

the same or perhaps even greater courage in various difficulties which he ran against during his many years in the exercise of the apostolic ministry in so many and such different localities. The spirit of Fortitude, in fact, is but too necessary for one who fights against vice and hell, exposing himself in this war to the taunts of the libertines whom he must correct, to the persecutions of the wicked whom he must withstand, and to the abuse of the obstinate who fear nothing. Anyone who listened to the sermons of St. Leonard can say whether he showed weakness of spirit towards any of these, or human respect, or fear. They all saw in him the strong and courageous spirit with which he spoke against the sins and the sinners, never fearing any difficulties or unpleasantness that might confront him.

Wherever he found scandal, laying aside every artifice of words, with the greatest vehemence and clearness he inveighed publicly and loudly against the culprits, and, in spite of their displeasure, as a man prudent and strong, though careful not to name them, he thundered away against the excesses he wished to remove. If this was not enough, and if with all the reprehension hurled from the platform the scandal did not cease, he either sent for the scandal-givers or went to their house, and, laying aside all human respect, with courage and apostolic freedom he placed before them their duties and the danger of eternal damnation to which they exposed themselves. He not only practiced this with ordinary persons, to whom the world seems to think that one may speak with greater liberty and frankness, but likewise with persons distinguished by birth, learning or dignity, whose disorders some people think must be touched on gently, if not overlooked. Many, even God's ministers, wondered at seeing the intrepidity by which, without in the least losing himself, publicly and privately, aiming only to promote God's honor and the salvation of souls, he freely inveighed against whatever he deemed reprehensible and which he thought should be corrected. A very prominent person, a confidant of St. Leonard, who, at his suggestion, had done many good works, fell sick in Rome; but our Saint had discovered that this patient, reduced to the point of death, mortally hated his nephew, whom he would neither deal with, see, nor hear spoken of. He had never dreamt of

such a thing before, and now went straight to the dying man, and, having reached his bedside, without any compliments, courageously told him: "Excellency, I loved you in life and while you enjoyed health, and I love you more now that you are sick and at the point of death. Therefore, for the love I bear your soul, I tell you, without any preamble, that it rests with you either to forgive your nephew or be damned." At such talk from the intrepid Servant of the Lord, the sick man, who had resisted with such stubbornness the pleadings of friends, that no one dared to speak to him any longer of reconciliation, softened at once, sent for his nephew, became reconciled with him and with God; and thus passed away to a better life.

Whilst he was giving the missions in a city of the Roman Campagna, our Saint was told that the women did not dress very modestly, and he recommended with the greatest earnestness that the young ladies especially should appear well covered, particularly when they attended church. Some young ladies belonging to the principal cities of Italy, flattered themselves that he would show them some consideration, either because he was stopping with the arch-priest, their uncle, or else because they belonged to a distinguished family. They, therefore, without heeding his recommendations and warnings, went to the church with their companions, dressed as usual, their shoulders almost bare, and took their places near the platform to hear the sermon. Someone informed the missionary of what had taken place; and he at the end of the sermon, explaining how necessary it was to help our neighbors in their needs, begged his hearers, with great warmth, to give that evening more abundant alms than usual, for an object which he had greatly at heart. While all were listening most attentively to hear how he was to use the money collected, he, with holy liberty and without the least fear, said at the end: "You wish to know to what the money that shall be collected after this sermon will be applied? Know you, then, that it will go for nothing else than to buy some canvas, in order to give a piece each to some young ladies, who, having heard my sermon, remain uncovered, because, perchance, they have not sufficient material to cover their shoulders." The girls blushed when they heard this, and, covering themselves then as best they

could, endeavored to dress more modestly in the future. They understood also, that the Minister of God was full of zeal for their conversion, and endowed with singular courage, by which means, speaking without human respect, he promoted their eternal salvation. Indeed, it can never be sufficiently told how little our Hero was influenced by those cowardly considerations that might have prevented another from wielding the sword of the Divine Word with all its efficacy, in order to cut the cords by which the souls are bound. Nor can it be known with how much Fortitude he was armed to attack vice, wherever it might be found, either in ordinary persons or in those of eminent rank. How great a need there seems to be, in our own days, of a St. Leonard, or some other minister of the Lord, who, filled with the like zeal and Fortitude, would cry out and oppose the barefaced immodesties and the excessive luxuries of many women as well as men in our own age!

Though all the places made famous by the apostolic labors of St. Leonard are witnesses to the zeal and Fortitude of spirit by which he reprimanded disorders and debaucheries, yet we will limit ourselves to the city of Rome alone, and out of the many times he there gave the missions, always admired by everybody as a man replete with the spirit of God, we will speak but of the time when he preached in Piazza Navona, when preparing the people for the Holy Year. For fifteen consecutive days he presented himself in that vast piazza, where, besides the ordinary people, who flocked to it in great multitudes, many also of the highest nobility, nearly all the Most Eminent Cardinals, and, several times, the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV himself, were present. Another person, without the Fortitude of this Hero, would have lost courage in seeing himself before so great an assemblage, made up of persons of every state and condition in life, and knowing that his mission was to speak to all of them, in such a way as to effect the conversion or the improvement of all. He, like another apostle, having nothing in view but the glory of God and the salvation of souls, inveighed with such force against vice, that everybody easily acknowledged him to be full of that spirit of which it is written: "*Ubi Spiritus Domini, ibi libertas*"—"Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"

(II Cor. iii, 17). In fact, with liberty and wonderful courage he openly reprimanded the sins of the people and the licentiousness of the nobles, the faults of the poor and the excesses of the rich, speaking with such vigor and clearness that each ecclesiastic or layman, noble or plebeian, rich or poor, found in his sermons what suited him. More than one person, even among those who exercised the same apostolic ministry, seeing the intrepidity with which the Man of God reprehended the vices of every condition of persons, even those of high office and sublime dignity, shrugged their shoulders and openly confessed their weakness, adding that they would have lacked such pluck, and that such a Fortitude of spirit was a quality possessed by our holy missionary alone.

But he showed greater boldness toward those giving scandal, whom he often met. This courage can be seen from the fact (leaving many others out) that we will here briefly relate. While preaching, in 1743, in a town of the Dominion of Genova, he found there a knight, who, to the public scandal of the place and the greatest grief of his relatives, was living in concubinage, from which no one had ever succeeded in converting him. St. Leonard, in his sermons, admonished and warned, depicting with the greatest vividness the deformity of this abominable vice, and the gravity of the punishment impending on him, who, not satisfied with damning himself, helps to damn others also by his scandals. These admonitions and scourgings not only had no effect whatever on the hardened heart of the blinded knight, but the following evening, while St. Leonard was preaching in the piazza, he listened to the sermon from the window in company with his concubine, as if boasting of his iniquity in the sight of all. When told of it, the zealous missionary blazed with so much indignation that flames seemed to dart from his eyes ; and the scandal, being public, he publicly reprimanded it with such vehemence that every word seemed like a thunderbolt to strike the culprit and shake him from his lethargy. Not satisfied even with this, he went to see the man in his own house, fearless of the danger, to which he exposed himself, of being insulted by the knight, who was angry because of the public reprehension hurled at him. With undaunted courage St. Leonard spoke to him,

and did all that his zeal suggested to him, that he might conquer him ; but, at last, seeing him so obstinate, he threatened him with a prompt and dire punishment of God, and turned his back upon the sinner. The prophetic words of the Saint were soon verified ; for, not many days afterwards, the wretch was killed by his own brother on the threshold of his palace. In order that it might appear evident that this had come to him because of his wickedness and obstinacy, God permitted that the copious blood shed upon the spot on which he fell, could never be washed off nor erased in any manner, but that it should remain there, visible to all for a long time, as a token of the vengeance that God takes upon those who, instead of bowing to the admonitions of His Servants, remain obstinate in their sins and laugh at them.

Finally, the Christian Fortitude of St. Leonard shone even better in his accepting, beginning and carrying out of the missions in the Island of Corsica. It was seen first in his accepting and undertaking them ; for he, being a Genoese, well knew that he was sent and had to preach to a hostile people, to a people split into factions—in rebellion and disorder, because enmities and intestinal hatreds, as has been said elsewhere, had torn up that island. His Fortitude shone even brighter still in giving those missions, compelled, as he sometimes was, to preach in the midst of armed members of opposite factions, as we have already narrated, and in being exposed often to danger of death,—all of which he endured without losing his coolness or failing in courage in the least degree. That we may not be too long in relating all the dangerous situations in which our Hero found himself, while preaching in Corsica, and the consequent display of heroic Fortitude on his part, it will suffice to relate here the following in confirmation of what we are asserting : Wherever he stopped in the island to give the missions, there appeared a certain Marco Aurelio, who held the office of Great Chancellor of King Teodoro. This man was highly esteemed by his partisans, and strove to keep together and strengthen their faction. He followed our missionary everywhere, and compelled him to arm himself with courage every time he ascended the platform, for the Saint was not aware of his purpose in so following him. While giving the missions in Omessa, the Apostolic Man spoke in a sermon with extraordinary

fervor upon the great evil caused by the dissensions, and showed how much profit accrued from it to hell. Marco Aurelio sent him word that unless he would stop speaking in that manner the martyrdoms of Japan would be renewed in Corsica. When St. Leonard received the word, without being frightened in the least, nay, with the courage of a Hero, he caused Aurelio to be led to his presence. Here the audacious man did not know what to say or how to answer the many arguments brought forward by the Servant of God, who, with an imperious tone of voice, ordered him to kneel down ; and, when he had done so, St. Leonard said : "Oh, hearken, obstinate one ! Since thou wilt not surrender to grace, at least do this : say every day one *Our Father* to St. Vincent Ferreri." This said, he dismissed him, adding : "Go away ! Get thyself hence from my sight !" The man promised to recite the short prayer, and departed with his head bowed down, whilst all those present were overcome with astonishment at the sight of the courage with which St. Leonard had spoken to a man who, because of his being one of the chief partisans and rioters, struck terror into all.

A few days afterwards our Hero reached Corti, in the Diocese of Aleria, one of the most conspicuous places in that island, and, having begun the missions there, was informed by the Governor of Bastia that a letter was circulating, in the name of the missionary himself, inviting all the prominent persons and heads of parishes to meet in Corti on a day appointed, in order to discuss conditions concerning the peace of the State,—which was a very delicate and dangerous thing. In the meantime many had arrived at Corti, and many more continued to arrive. The Servant of God saw at once that, if he remained silent, a spark might cause a big fire, while, if he spoke, he placed himself very evidently in grave danger. But he, armed with Fortitude, and fearless of any sinister accident, ascended the platform on the same day that he discovered the plot, and protested that "he was not the author of the letter which had been sent around in his name, nay, that he was totally ignorant of it." He even added : "This is a hellish plot, and he, who by his maneuverings would have prevented peace from being established, would become guilty of all the sins that, in consequence, would be per-

petrated in the whole island." When they heard this, the chiefs, who had gathered there from various parts of the island, were astonished and wondered; and, suddenly changing their minds, cried out unanimously: "Peace! Peace!" Among them was the above-mentioned Marco Aurelio, who, though a bandit, with a heavy price upon his head, humbled himself before St. Leonard, and, complying with his exhortations, prostrated himself at the feet of the Governor of Bastia, armed with a letter from the Saint, and, being well received, obtained benign forgiveness.

Our Saint evinced no less Fortitude in the town of Caccia, Diocese of Mariana, where there were two families at deadly enmity. He influenced them so much by his sermons and exhortations, that he disposed them to lay down their hatred and make peace. These two families, with their respective followers, had gone to the Convent of the Minor Observants, where the Saint was stopping, to arrange the terms of peace. One of the parties refused to agree to the adjustment of certain material interests as proposed by the other family, and at once took up their arms. One of them had already raised his gun to shoot, which, if he had done so, would have caused many a murder, for there were hundreds of armed men in each faction. At the sight of this grave danger, our Saint, without losing his head in the least, nay, with wonderful intrepidity of spirit, ran, in the confusion, and caught the arm of the man, not considering his own danger, but determined to prevent the loss of life. He begged and exhorted both sides to desist, and finally succeeded in quelling the tumult and pacifying the multitude, again reuniting them in peace. Many other instances of heroic Fortitude shown by St. Leonard, in overcoming other difficulties and oppositions, and in surmounting the gravest dangers, might be related here, did we not, as has been said above, fear to become too lengthy; hence, let what has been related suffice to show how richly endowed with this glorious virtue our Saint was.

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

Humility and Patience of St. Leonard.

HUMILITY being a virtue which consists in having lowly thoughts of ourselves, it follows that, according to the little or great knowledge we have of our unworthiness, we also possess humility in various degrees. One, therefore, who thinks of himself in a lowly manner is called humble ; but if he willingly hears that others also entertain such an opinion of him, he is called humbler ; and, finally, if he wishes and endeavors to be despised and contemned, he is most humble. St. Leonard proved himself to be the possessor of this virtue of Humility in all of these three degrees ; for he not only held himself always in the lowest estimation, but also wished to be so regarded by others, and consequently he sincerely desired to be despised and mocked at by all. It clearly appears from the Resolutions he made and renewed, how lowly was his own opinion of himself, for they were the outcome of his inmost heart, and were dictated by the conviction of his soul ; and, therefore, they afford a sure proof in confirmation of this assertion. Hence it is that he was never heard to utter a word which might have redounded to his own glory, but, on the contrary, all his discourses aimed at belittling himself. Though, because of the wonderful and most abundant fruit which was derived from his sermons, and more so on account of his virtues, he saw himself universally esteemed and applauded, he never showed any pride and never took pleasure in it, but, on the contrary, covered his face from shame and confusion, ascribing all to the simplicity of ignorant persons, who (he used to say) made those demonstrations because they knew not who he was. If often happened that, whilst he was walking along the streets, multitudes of people would crowd around him to see him and kiss his hand ; and, at times, the crowds were so great that they prevented him from pursuing his journey. But he, as if distracted, without even looking at what the crowds were doing, would get rid of them as best he could, and go on his way. Several times his companion asked what he

felt in his soul at the sight of such great devotion as was shown to him by the people, and he answered : "Brother, the simplicity of these people is great. They do not know me well enough ; if they understood what I am, they would not only omit these demonstrations, but stone me."

Because of this low esteem in which he held himself, it was a familiar, ordinary and constant thing for him to humble himself to everyone and to deem himself the worst of all men. Often in the convents he would prostrate himself before all the Religious, acknowledging himself to be an empty reed, and would declare that "whilst he procured the salvation of others and strove to enkindle in them the love of God, his own heart remained hard and cold. He would recommend himself to their prayers, that they might obtain for him from God the grace that, whilst preaching unto others and leading them to Paradise, he himself should not become a reprobate and be cast into hell." He said these things with such deep feeling, accompanied by tears, that they clearly proved that they sprang from a heart truly humble, and from a soul that, in his own estimation, he deemed unworthy. Upon reaching any place where he was to give the missions, after first visiting the church, he would go directly to the house of the pastors, and, there kneeling, would kiss their hands and ask their blessing. Not satisfied with this, when he was preaching the sermon on "The Madonna," he publicly kissed the feet of all the priests ; and, by this act of humility, influenced many to give up their hatreds and become reconciled with their enemies ; for a number of persons, even of high standing, when they saw that the missionary gave them such a beautiful example, were filled with confusion, publicly humbled themselves, too, and made peace with their enemies. Even some bishops were seen, to the edification and compunction of the people, to leave their throne during the sermon and kiss the feet of those persons to whom they had been, for some time, hostile. Nor was St. Leonard humble with his Superiors only, but also with his inferiors and equals. He submitted to the advice of all, and put their counsels into practice, even though they might be those of mere lay Brothers, who, on several occasions, came forward to advise him about certain things. His answer, without being the least agi-

tated, was ordinarily as follows : "Yes, Brother ; you are right ; I will do as you tell me." And to a Brother who warned him by letter not to grow vain on account of the crowds and the applause attending his missions, he answered in the following words : "I thank you for your good advice, of which I stand very much in need." On another occasion a companion of his having told him to change some of his sermons, he answered that he had no intention of doing it, because this would seem to be done rather to please the people than to produce greater profit. He reflected, later on, upon this answer, and, on the following morning, kneeling at the feet of this companion, he asked his pardon for having answered him in such a manner, begging him to excuse him if he had scandalized him ; as he was a proud man.

He knew that the people, at the close of the missions, wished to accompany him out of the towns, and he would therefore take his departure before daylight, so that no one would know it ; and if he chanced to pass through places where he was known, he would pull the cowl over his head, and walk faster. Sometimes he took the most remote roads, thus lengthening his journey, in order not to meet anyone who knew him, fearing honors more than worldlings fear affronts. When he gave the missions in Porto Maurizio, his birthplace, his fellow-citizens wished to obtain a portrait of him, and had him sketched full size, whilst he was preaching, without his noticing it. When the work was finished, they confidently asked him whether he knew whom the painting was like. He was confused at the sight of the picture, and, turning to the gentlemen, said to them : "What have you done? May God forgive you !" Covered with blushes, he burst into tears. Seeing this, those gentlemen, edified and regretful, said one to another : "We were thinking of doing something agreeable to Father Leonard, and, instead, we have made him weep !" He grieved greatly whenever he saw any person, out of devotion, cutting off pieces of his habit or of his cloak ; and strove to do away with the good opinion that was entertained of him, by speaking words of abasement of himself. While giving the instructions from the platform in Arpino, someone deftly cut a piece from his habit. When he noticed the fact, he showed his

contempt for such a thing, and said to the man standing nearby, scissors and piece of cloth in hand: "You have made a great gain! Oh! go on; now you are rich!" In the same city they changed his staff, putting another in its place, for they wished to retain his as a relic. The sermon being over, he noticed, in taking up the staff, that it was not the one he had before, and, shrugging his shoulders, said: "Oh, my! It is easy to see how simple these people are! That staff will be good for them when they will gather the figs!" Thus he showed the contempt he felt for himself, and the wish that no person should laud and honor him.

Moreover, he was more willing to hear the confessions of the poor than those of the rich; and exhorted his companions to do likewise, for the reasons that the "poor people being humble, should be received and heard with greater pleasure; whilst the rich can find time and as many confessors as they choose; but the poor not so." This same love for Humility caused him, who might have enjoyed friendship and familiarity with many distinguished persons, purposely to discontinue correspondence with them, and when they came to visit him, after he had complied with their requests and had done what simple convenience required, he would take leave of them in a polite manner. In regard to this point he was wont to say: "It is not becoming in a Religious, who professes to follow the humility of the Crucified One, to be seen daily in the palaces of the nobles, yearning to mix with the great ones of the world." Being asked by some of his co-Religious, why, in some of his sermons, he introduced extracts from those already published by others, thus laying himself open to a charge of plagiarism, he, smiling, would answer: "And what does it matter if they do put me down as a copyist? I know that, though I should give much time and study to it, I could never succeed in expressing myself in such appropriate phrases as these authors do from whom I have taken extracts. Why, then, do you wish me to use my own words only, when this would not be so suitable and efficacious to produce fruit in the souls? This alone matters to me. But that I be accused and held guilty of ignorance and plagiarism, does not matter to me at all." The less he made of the esteem of men the more

he rejoiced when something humiliating happened to him, repeating, then, to himself: "Humble thyself, O proud man!" What we here relate happened on one of the occasions on which he went to the Solitude of the Incontro to make his Spiritual Retreat. We will state it in the words of the President of the *Santuario*, which he left written by his own hand: "Whilst I was President of the Solitude, Father Leonard came to make his spiritual exercises together with Brother Diego, and they being, one morning, on their knees, Father Leonard saying "*Mea culpa*" in the refectory, an impetuosity of words forced me to say, among other things, to try his spirit: 'With these missions of yours, Father Leonard, you appear to yourself to be a great man. On account of four rags of sermons, all want you, all acclaim you as a great missionary. Oh, how much pride I think is lodged in the head of your Reverence! Therefore, Brother Diego, stand up and put your feet on that proud head, and say to him: Father Leonard, lower your head!' I confess, that after these words, I felt ashamed, and said to myself: 'Alas! what did I say?' and remained full of confusion. Finally, I judged that the Lord had made me say those words for his spiritual profit; nay, I believe it, because he took them so resignedly and in all quietness and peace; and later on, when I met him, he cheerfully said to me: 'May God reward you for it.'" Thus the President exercised him in this act of humiliation, which was great, indeed; but our Saint was not troubled by it in the least, nay, rather thanked the author of it and rejoiced, as the latter himself asserts.

St. Leonard held as the rule, "to wish for everything which tended to his abasement," and often examined himself as to its fulfillment. This also proceeded from the virtue of humility. Hence, he left this written: "I will love to live despised, forgotten, contemned, and trampled under foot worse than the mud; and I pray to God to make me die in some place where I may not be known except as an outcast, and where my body may be thrown into some trench without any honors." Then he added: "One ounce of despisement and despicableness and confusion before men is worth more than a hundred pounds of honors, and praises, and applauses from this deceiving world." That, in truth, he loved humiliations, appears also from the fact that he had obtained

from the two Sovereign Pontiffs, Clement XII and Benedict XIV, the promise that he should never be raised in the Order to any dignity. He was satisfied to go about always barefooted, wearing the poorest and patched habit, and being employed in the meanest offices in the convents, subjecting himself to all, and depending upon the will and advice of others, even while giving the missions. During the Holy Year, he went every Sunday, at 20 o'clock,(1) to the Vatican Palace, by order of said Pope Benedict XIV, who received him with special benevolence. When he emerged afterwards from a secret conference, his companion asked him how his humility bore his being treated with so much love by the Vicar of Christ; and he answered him, saying: "Listen, Brother. What His Holiness does with me, a poor little friar, proceeds from his supreme benignity and clemency. But I would greatly rejoice if His Holiness would mortify me well, calling me a hypocrite, a swindler, a rascal, and would cast me off from his presence, forbidding me ever to appear any more at the Palace. Each time I go there, I am prepared to accept every mortification and confusion; for I know that I richly deserve it, should I be so dealt with."

With the like disposition he received all the tokens of veneration and esteem that came to him from the inhabitants of those places through which he passed, and of those where he resided or tarried to give the mission, or for any other reason. He was held in high esteem not only by the common people, but also by those of high standing and respectability, in the castles, boroughs and villages, as well as in the most prominent and cultured cities, and was everywhere regarded and acclaimed as a Saint. In Tuscany and elsewhere he was called the Apostle; in the Island of Corsica he was not spoken of by any other name than the *Padre Santo;* and in many places they extolled him as an Apostolic Man, a Soul the most pleasing to God for those times, and an Angel of the Lord. In the Dioceses of Lucca and Aquila, when he was passing through the country and nearing the cities, they would ring bells as for a feast, and the people gathering, at this signal, along the highways, would leave their

(1) Old way of reckoning time in Italy.—*Note of the Translator.*

villages almost deserted, in order to receive his blessing. The clergy, too, would go, though he might be on the way to give a mission, or to visit their places. In Rome itself, as soon as he appeared in the streets, the people crowded to see him, and the children urged one another to approach him and kiss his cloak, or his hand, becoming quiet and subdued as soon as they saw him in the distance. During the Holy Year 1750, the General Chapter of the Order was held in the Church of Aracœli, and the Religious stationed in Rome went in procession to St. Peter's, among them being our Saint. The multitude of people that congregated to do him homage was so enormously large that it was with the greatest difficulty he was rescued from the surging crowd and enabled to reach the Vatican. When he left there, they pressed around him so that they pushed and trampled, and nearly smothered him, and it was necessary for a soldier to accompany him to the Capitol in order to protect him. In consequence of this, it was deemed better to leave him in the convent during the visits to the other Basilicas, in order to avoid all difficulties. The esteem and veneration of the people for him went so far, that a person who obtained a piece of his habit, his cloak, or anything else that had been used by him, would call himself lucky. Hence, some people would publicly cut pieces from his clothes ; several times they changed his very cloak, his Crucifix, a wooden Cross with sharp iron points, that he was in the habit of carrying on his breast, his Rosary, his discipline, or any other thing, as has been said, which might have been used by him ; others, finally, even took the towels with which he wiped his hands, the sandals with which he approached the Altar, the Purificators he used in celebrating Mass, and the very covers he made use of while sleeping, or traveling, or while in the houses of seculars, regarding all these things as relics, and keeping them as such with devotion.

What more? Both while he was in the convent, and when outside of it, engaged in the missions or for some other reason, there were many who, from the doorkeeper or from some other Religious, endeavored to secure some fragment of bread left over by the Servant of God, or some drops of water wherewith he had washed his hands, or some other object touched or used

by him, receiving it with joy and keeping it with reverence. Not the ignorant and common people only had such a high opinion of St. Leonard, but, I repeat it, people of high standing and judgment as well; in fact, the lords of Ferrara, when he preached the missions there in 1746, in order to satisfy the devotion of all its citizens, had his portrait engraved on copper and then printed many copies of it, which they sent even to far-away countries. The Duke of St. Aignan, then Ambassador at Rome for the Crown of France, begged and obtained the Crucifix which the Saint carried on his breast when making the missions, and, having it copied by an excellent painter, took it with him to his country as a treasure. Her Majesty the Queen Maria Clementina, a princess of singular piety and virtue, wished to consult him about her spiritual affairs, and receive the advice most suitable to the acquisition of that sublime perfection to which she aspired and to which God called her. Later on, she was much pleased, and accepted with great veneration the gift of a wooden Cross with sharp points of steel, made to her by a person who had secretly taken this Cross and replaced it by another. Yet, we wish to say, in the sight of all these honors, and in the midst of so many tokens of esteem, the humble Servant of God never became proud nor departed from his low estimation of himself; nay, in the midst of all this applause and homage, he abased himself the more and wished to be reviled and despised, attributing everything to the people's simplicity and the fact of his not being known.

His Patience was proportionate to his Humility, for, if the latter caused him to deem himself despicable in his own estimation, and deserving of every abasement, the former rendered him prompt to endure, for virtue's sake, whatever opposition might befall him. We have already seen with how much patience he exercised for so many years the apostolic ministry; hence, we will only say here that whatever happened to him, either favorable or adverse, he accepted it with the same brightness of spirit and countenance, as coming from the hands of God. His father, already advanced in years, went to Florence to visit him. It had been many years since he had seen him, yet the Guardian ordered the Saint to dismiss him, after only three days. This

he promptly did, without uttering a single word of complaint or showing the least sign of sadness; though the order was indiscreet, and he also knew that his father had not been so well received the first evening, and felt certain that he would not see him again, as was really the case. While Guardian of the Monte, on one occasion he went, in company with the Guardian of Prato, to the Holy Mount of the Alvernia, where the Provincial Chapter was assembled, in order to cast his vote, and on the way a heavy shower overtook them. Before reaching a small town where they were known, St. Leonard thus spoke to his companion: "If, when we arrive at the town, we should not find anyone willing to shelter us this evening, and, though all wet and dripping, nobody should look at us, and finally, upon entering a house, they should throw us out, loading us with insults, how, do you think, should we be willing to endure it?" His companion answered him that he did not think such a thing would ever happen to them; but, in case it should, he would dislike it very much. Then the Servant of God replied: "Nay, should it ever happen to us, we should greatly rejoice at it; the perfection of the Friars Minor consists in just this, according to what our Father St. Francis taught Brother Leo." What he thus foretold actually happened; for when they reached, at a late hour, a small village, they could not find anyone to give them lodging, everyone excusing himself on account of being poor and having no accommodation for them. They went to the house of one of the prominent persons, where, after knocking several times, a maid-servant with an ugly mien came to the door, and, giving them a rag with which to dry themselves, led them to a coach-house and stable; but, shortly after, the same woman returned and bade them, in an imperious manner, to depart, saying she would not harbor any person whatsoever without her master's permission. St. Leonard and his companion were obliged to leave, and, as the latter was complaining of such bad treatment, our Saint, full of joy, said to him: "Now is the time to earn merit; this is a present from the loving hand of God; and shall we refuse it? Let us go hence; God will provide for us." And so it was done; for, no sooner had they left

that place than they were kindly received by a pious person, who gave them shelter for the night.

Once while in the infirmary on account of a sore foot, which compelled him to lie in bed, a Religious went to visit him, and asked him how he felt: "Well," replied the Saint. "How can you feel well," said the Religious, "since you are in bed in pain and cannot move?" But the Saint answered: "I am doing the will of my good Lord; and he who does the will of God is sure to feel well." With this principle most firmly fixed in his heart, he was never seen to get angry or be impatient in the least, not even at the most unexpected and troublesome occurrences. In the exercise of the apostolic ministry, he had many opportunities to show the brightness of this virtue; for often he was dealt with in a manner painful to human nature; but he endured everything without in the least losing his tranquillity of spirit. In 1743, while preaching the missions in Genova, he received an order from Rome to go to Nizza, which he immediately obeyed. On arriving there, though the city received him with all respect, he, who had previously asked with persistence for the missions, showed himself wholly opposed to them, and even refused an audience to the missionaries, giving them to understand that they would please him more if, instead of remaining, they should return to Genova. Amazed at this unexpected reception, St. Leonard's companions were unable to give themselves peace; but he, with his wonted calm, said to them: "God now balances the load. In Genova, so much applause might have made us feel proud; here, we are refused. You see? God adds some counterpoise, that we may be humble;" and, without at all perturbing himself, having loaded up everything pertaining to the missions, he left, showing that as he was rich in humility to lower himself, so was he also endowed with patience to suffer cheerfully and in peace whatever adversity he might meet with. From what has been thus far said it appears clearly that St. Leonard was armed with all the virtues, in the possession of which sanctity consists. Now we shall also see how God wished to give the clearest testimony of this fact, by means of those supernatural gifts with which He enriched him; for, though these are gratuitous and serve rather to benefit others than to justify

their possessor, nevertheless as God does not ordinarily impart them, except to those souls that are dearer to Him and rich in virtues, consequently they are, as a rule, sure and indisputable signs of the presence of the virtues themselves and of the sanctity of him who receives these gifts.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

Of the gift of Prophecy and Penetration of hearts with which St. Leonard was adorned.

AMONG the graces or gratuitous gifts (*gratiæ gratis-datæ*), mentioned by St. Paul in Chapter XII of his First Epistle to the Corinthians (verses 7, 8, 9, 10), which God grants to whomsoever He pleases, and how and when He likes best, there is that of Prophecy and Penetration of the heart, or the Discernment of spirit; and with both of these God did abundantly enrich our Hero. Many facts might be related here in proof of this assertion; but, for the sake of brevity, I will only mention a few, which will be amply sufficient for our purpose.

In the year 1750, Giustina Capodacqua-Parenti went with some relatives from Capistrello, her birthplace, to Rome, to gain the Jubilee of the Holy Year, and, on the morning of the 8th of November, she visited the Church of St. Bonaventure, to make her confession to St. Leonard, whom she already knew. The Saint told her to make the Stations of the Cross there and return in the afternoon. Giustina answered that this was impossible; because her company was awaiting her, and she was in a hurry to leave. The Saint replied: "As you cannot return to-day, come, at least, to-morrow;" and, upon her saying that she could only come back after three days, the Saint went on to say to her: "I tell you, daughter, to return to-day or to-morrow; otherwise you will no longer have time to do it." When Giustina insisted to the end that she would have time to come

back, as she was going to tarry in Rome for several weeks, the Man of God concluded: "No; you will not be able to do it. I am aware that you will not leave Rome so soon; but, if you do not return to-day or to-morrow, you will not be able to get back here to me or to anybody else." The woman left the church, and related to her sisters what had happened to her, adding that she felt a fear growing in her mind lest the words of St. Leonard portended some evil, which actually would prevent her returning to that church. Two days later, Giustina was attacked by a most violent fever, although up to that time she had been in perfect health. This illness compelled her to remain bedfast for many days, until, by the advice of the physicians, she was forced to return quickly to her native place, without being able to visit St. Bonaventure's again, as the Saint had foretold.

A young lady, Angela Savelli, from Poggio Mirteto, after having spent four years in being educated at the Monastery of St. Clare in Roccantica, returned to her father's house, where she met St. Leonard, who was then giving a mission in that place, and was exhorted by him to go back to this monastery, remain there three more months and perform the spiritual exercises, meditating seriously upon the condition of her soul, for, in doing so, she would discover the Lord's will in regard to her. The young lady obeyed, and was taken back by her mother to the monastery, where, willingly and in good health, she was to spend the three months, after which she was to come out again and return home. But towards the end of the three months she began to feel ill, though the physician, who was called in several times, always found her without fever. Finally, one morning, a very slight fever was discovered, and, notwithstanding its seeming unimportance, about noontime on the same day, to the wonderment of all who then heard of the Saint's prediction, placidly and with tokens of singular piety and devotion, she passed away to a better life.

A young lady, Maria Francesca Strafforello, was being educated in the Monastery of Porto Maurizio, her native place, and St. Leonard, who was then engaged in giving the missions in that town, also gave a Retreat to the Religieuses of said monas-

tery, and thus had several spiritual conferences with this young lady. Among other things, he earnestly exhorted her that, when she put on the religious habit, she should faithfully observe the Rules of the Order, attend with fervor to the acquisition of the holy virtues and prepare herself well for eternity; as between her nineteenth and twentieth year, by an accident which would befall her, she would die. Shortly after, that young lady became a nun and took the name of Sister Maria Violante. She kept well in mind what had been told her by the holy missionary, and lived in a constant fear, especially when she reached the nineteenth year of her age; hence, she practiced many special devotions in order to prepare herself for death. Among other things she had procured for herself a skull, which she kept in her cell, and, with it ever before her eyes, spent her time in constant meditations, awaiting the Lord's call. At this time she became slightly ill, and, believing this to be the accident from which she was to die, prepared herself more than ever for the great passage, relating to the nuns what St. Leonard, some years previously, had foretold. She recovered from that ailment; but, shortly afterward, the surgeon had to be called in to treat an ingrown nail on one of her toes, and when he reached the monastery, and saw the nail, he thought it should be operated upon. Taking his instruments, he cut too deeply, and thus caused the patient to go into such convulsions that she soon became delirious. As no remedy could be found for it, after but three days, she died at the age of nineteen years and seven months, to the consternation of all those Religieuses who deposed concerning this occurrence.

In the same monastery, and on the same occasion of the spiritual exercises above mentioned, a young lady, Anna Gandolfo, of the same city, had an interview with St. Leonard, in which she made known to him the resolution she had taken to become a nun. The Servant of God listened to all that the young lady had to say, and then said to her: "You will never become a nun." As she seemed displeased at this answer, and protested that she had made a firm resolution to become a nun, and that nobody would ever make her change it, the Saint added: "Yes, daughter; just now you are determined to put on the

religious habit; but I tell you that you will never be a nun." St. Leonard left Porto Maurizio, and Anna Gandolfo persevered in her determination for two years; after which she petitioned the nuns to receive her, and they, having held a Chapter, gladly accepted her. Everything needful for the sacred function, which was to take place within a few days, was prepared; but the young lady wished to leave the monastery and spend a little time at home with her parents, with the full determination, however, of returning to the cloister at an early date, and receiving the much-wished-for religious habit. There she was allured by the vanities of the world, and, giving up all idea of becoming a nun, she married, instead, a gentleman of San Remo, and died in the prime of life; thus fulfilling the prediction of St. Leonard. In the Monastery of St. Catharine, in the city of St. Severino in the Marche region, a Religieuse, Sister Angela Rosalia Servanzi, young in years and in perfect health, having gone to confession to St. Leonard, was told by him to prepare for eternity, as she was to die shortly; and so it came to pass. In Osimo, St. Leonard told a young lady of the Condotti family that she would become a nun in the same Monastery of St. Catharine, where she had been refused. After six years, when the young woman was thinking no more of this monastery, she was asked by these very nuns to go there, and she became a Religieuse, thus verifying the prediction of the Man of God. When he was giving the missions in Frascati, one Anna Antonia di Nicola went to St. Leonard to make a general confession; and he, having heard her, said clearly to her: "You are pregnant, and will give birth to a male; who, however, is not for yourself, but for Paradise." And so it happened, for, at the proper time, she brought forth a boy, who died when seven months old.

Nor was St. Leonard less wonderful in penetrating the mind and the conscience of others, as clearly appears from the following instances: Whilst he was giving the missions in Aquila, in 1748, he went to a house where a man dwelt, with whom the Servant of God had journeyed on going to that city, and after discoursing several times, on this occasion, upon the life eternal, the man ended by saying that he wished to make his confession to him. The Servant of God welcomed him with all charity,

encouraged him and exhorted him to make a good confession, since God had sent him that good inspiration and offered him such an excellent opportunity ; after which the penitent began his confession. Seven months had elapsed since he had been to confession before ; and having told all that, to him, seemed to trouble his conscience, he concluded by adding that he remembered nothing else. But St. Leonard said to him : "No, son ; think it over a little better ; make a more diligent examination of your conscience, and you will find out that there is something else to be said." The man reflected more seriously on his past life, and then repeated that he remembered nothing more. Then the saintly confessor replied : "But do you not recollect, perchance, that in such a month, and on such a day, you fell into those other grievous sins? Why, then, not confess here, now, everything sincerely?" The penitent was astonished at hearing himself reminded, in particular, of sins he had entirely forgotten ; and having confessed them, received absolution to his very great delight. He related, afterwards, to many what had happened to him ; and when informed of the death of St. Leonard, sent a juridical affidavit thereof, to the glory of God and his Servant.

Whilst St. Leonard was giving the missions in Ancona, Father Sanzi, Prior of the Camaldolenses, heard one of his sermons, and, in the very act of hearing it, felt some doubts arise in his mind, in consequence of which he resolved to confer with the holy missionary. The sermon being over, and as soon as St. Leonard descended from the pulpit, he called aside the Father Prior, and, to his amazement, solved all the doubts he had in his mind, and which he had never manifested to anybody.

In the Monastery of Levanto, a place situated in the Genoese Republic, there was a young nun who wished to make her confession to St. Leonard ; and he went to the monastery and heard the confessions of the nuns in the order of seniority. Finally, this young nun came to his feet, made her confession and was well pleased with it ; but, afterwards, giving another glance at her conscience, felt many scruples and became very much disquieted. The Saint, after having heard the confessions of all the nuns, none of whom he knew, caused the young nun, who was at a loss to know how to see him again, to be called back,

and, hearing her over again, left her both amazed and extremely consoled.

When preaching in a city of the Campagna, not very far from Rome, among the many who went to confession to our Saint, was a man who, many years previously, had secretly perpetrated a homicide, but had never mustered up enough courage to confess it and get absolution for his sin. Several times he had gone, with this intention, to the feet of the confessors ; but when he was about to tell the crime, he was deceived by various suggestions of the devil, and passed it over in silence, adding sin to sin by making all his confessions and communions sacrilegiously. As soon as St. Leonard reached that city to give the missions, this man, who felt constant twinges of conscience, heard the sermons, and began to be so visibly tortured by them that he resolved, at all hazards, to confess his sin, and, with it, lay bare all his wickedness to the missionary, and thus return to the Lord, from whom, for so many years, he had kept far off. And so he went to the Man of God, and began his confession, accusing himself of his various sins ; but when he was about to reveal the homicide which he had committed, deceived once more by the devil, he lacked the courage to confess it, and concluded his confession by passing it over in silence. The loving Father encouraged him by telling him to "continue and not to fear anything ;" as he was there to hear him and loosen him from every sin ; but the wretch, yielding to the diabolical suggestion, answered that he had confessed all, and that nothing else troubled him. St. Leonard, hearing this, told him : "Since you lack the courage to confess that sin, I will remind you of it ;" and then he continued : "Brother, you own an orchard, wherefrom, so many years ago, in a certain month, on a certain day, a man came in the night-time to steal your artichokes. You were watching in the orchard, whilst that man was committing the theft, and, picking up stones, you struck him with one of them in the head, and that poor unfortunate fell at once to the ground dead. When you saw that you had committed a homicide, you dug a hole nearby under a fig tree, and there buried him ; which deed, though it never came to the notice of men, is nevertheless written in the book of God ; but you never had the courage to

confess this sin. Confess it now, that you may obtain forgiveness for it from the Lord, who has patiently awaited you till this moment.'' Everybody can imagine how that man must have felt upon hearing minutely related, in all its circumstances, a fact which had taken place so many years before, and which could be known but to God alone. Seeing, therefore, that the Lord, for the good of his soul, had given that light to His Servant, he made then and there a good confession. When he met, some years later, two Religious of the same Franciscan Order as St. Leonard, he related to them the above occurrence, and declared that he was extremely obliged to him for having pulled him out of hell.

In the year 1748, after having closed the missions in Arpino with exceedingly great fruit for its inhabitants, the nuns located in that city wished to hear him also and receive from him those prudent counsels and spiritual regulations which he was known to give to the Religieuses, that they might be animated to reach perfection. Hence, they begged him to visit their monasteries, and, in one of these, an elderly nun wished to consult with him about various matters concerning her soul, but without any intention of making her confession, as it seemed to her that nothing whatever troubled her conscience. St. Leonard listened to her a little while, but, seeing that she intended to talk for a long time, he interrupted her discourse, and said to her: ''Daughter, I have no time to throw away. You need to make your confession, since, in your youthful age, you committed such a sin, and, through your forgetfulness, have never confessed it. Is it not true? Very well, then, confess it now and I am ready to absolve you from it.'' The Religieuse who, upon hearing this, remembered very well the sin she had committed, but which, through forgetfulness, she had never confessed, wondered at first, and then, giving thanks to the Lord for having sent her a man who penetrated into the very centre of consciences and hearts, made a full confession to the Saint, and after he had passed away, wished to make a juridical deposition of what had happened to her. Not a few others declared having the same experience, and have stated and related that St. Leonard, particularly in hearing confessions, was endowed with the gift of the Discernment of spirit,

suggesting to them, as to the above-mentioned persons, various sins which they had never had the courage to confess, or had entirely forgotten. But, as it would take too long to relate here all such occurrences, we will omit them and make mention of other gifts, through which God wished to prove more and more the virtues and sanctity of His Servant.

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

Of other Supernatural Gifts that God granted to St. Leonard.

THOUGH St. Leonard did not appear endowed with the Gift of tongues, viz., the gift of speaking diverse languages or of being understood, when preaching, by people of different nations whilst speaking our language (Italian), for he never went out of Italy to preach to people of other countries ; nevertheless, God gave such power to his voice that with it he wrought wonderful conversions, softening most obdurate and obstinate hearts. This is made evident by the very missions he gave, and of which we spoke in Part First of this book ; the authentic testimony of persons of authority also tends to prove it. Some of this may be found at the end of his Life, written by Father Raffaele of Rome, a Religious of the same Retreat of St. Bonaventure and a contemporary of the Saint, dedicated to the Sovereign Pontiff Benedict XIV, and printed in Rome in the year 1754. These truthful evidences give us an assurance of the virtues and sanctity of our Hero, and, at the same time, verify what we are now saying ; as the Most Eminent Cardinal Guadagni, Vicar, at one time, of the above Pontiff, writes in his deposition : "The word of God in his mouth was so efficacious and penetrating that, in a short time, all could be seen touched thereby ;" and Monsignor Ferdinando Romualdo Guiccioli, Archbishop of Ravenna, not to quote others, expresses himself, in his statement, as follows : "The power of his words, together with the influence of his virtues, acted on

the hearts of all with a sweet violence." In one word, as we have said, while he had not the gift of speaking diverse tongues, yet, by the force with which in preaching he wrought so many wonders among the people, we can justly say that God "*dedit voci suæ vocem virtutis*"—God "gave his voice the voice of power" (Ps. lxvii, 34); and that the voice of St. Leonard was "*Vox Domini in virtute, vox Domini in magnificentia, vox Domini confringentis cedros*"—"The voice of the Lord in power, the voice of the Lord in magnificence, the voice of the Lord breaking the cedars" (Ps. xxviii, 4, 5). Ever resounding and penetrating, it could be heard equally well by those who were near and those who were far off, even in places very large and spacious, as has been opportunely remarked in Part First. But, on some occasions, he had also the gift of making himself understood, whilst preaching in Italian, even by those who had no knowledge of Italian at all. In fact, whilst he was giving the missions in Assisi, at the Conservatory of the Germans, which then existed in that city, there was one Sister Maria Cebidaure Adler, afterwards a nun in the Monastery of the Assumption in the town of St. Giusto, who had arrived from Germany shortly before the missions were started, and, not speaking a single word of the Italian language, did not wish to go to the sermon, because, as she, of course, thought, she would understand nothing of what the missionary would say. This notwithstanding, the confessor urged her to go; and, to her wonderment and that of all who heard of it, she understood very well the sermon preached by St. Leonard in the Italian tongue, repeating, in German, the whole sermon clearly and distinctly as soon as she returned to the conservatory.

St. Leonard had power also over the clouds, when these threatened rain, commanding them to hold it so that the sacred functions might not be hindered, and the people, coming from afar to attend them, might not be prevented from doing so, nor suffer inconvenience. In the year 1744, he was giving the missions in Viareggio, Diocese of Lucca; and, multitudes flocking there from the surrounding towns and villages, the church could not hold them, so that he was compelled to preach in the public square. One day, as the people were crowded there, awaiting

the sermon, all at once the sky became dark and a heavy rain began to fall. The people ran hither and thither, and it seemed that it would be impossible for the Saint to preach in the open air, or for the strangers to get safely home to their respective places. St. Leonard being told of it, was full of compassion for those poor people, and yet wished them to hear the word of God; so he opened the window of the room where he was, and made with his hand the Sign of the Cross. The rain ceased immediately, to the wonder of all; the clouds disappeared entirely, and the sun came out so clear and bright that the Saint could preach in the piazza, and all the people were able to return to their homes, magnifying the Lord in His Servant.

In other places, too, when he was about to speak, or while actually preaching, if the people were frightened by loud thunderclaps, portending a brewing storm and heavy rain nearby, he would make them recite one *Our Father* and one *Hail Mary*, and the weather at once cleared up. It happened thus in Monticelli, Diocese of Tivoli, in Porto Maurizio, his birthplace, and elsewhere. At the end of Chapter X, Part First, we related that, in Camajore, in the Province of Lucca, in order to convert an obstinate sinner whom he found there, St. Leonard prayed to the Lord to send a thunderbolt to soften that hardened heart; and immediately one came out of the clear sky, to the greatest terror of all present, who heard the clap and saw several globes of fire darting around the church.

St. Leonard had also power over the devil, as may be gathered from the fact which we shall presently relate, omitting many similar incidents. In the year 1732, he gave the missions in Piperno, and they had erected near the main altar a platform, from which he was wont to preach. It was made by binding together, with ropes, some posts to support the boards that made up the floor. By the side of St. Leonard, on this platform, also stood a man in sackcloth, holding a Crucifix. One day, for the sake of devotion, a gentleman named Tiburzio Zaccaglioni, wished to hold IT, and was, therefore, on the platform, when he noticed that the saintly missionary, having reached the middle of his sermon, stopped suddenly, and, stamping hard with his foot on the boards, said the following words: "Are you not done yet,

beast?" Tiburzio was astonished at hearing this, not understanding its meaning. After a little while he noticed a general whispering among the people surrounding the platform, caused by the discovery that all the ropes had been cut, although no one knew how or by whom. He understood that they feared all the supports of the platform were in danger of falling, which would have thrown the missionary and all who were with him to the ground. This, of course, was bound to happen ; but St. Leonard, though conscious of it, went on, intrepidly, with his sermon, moving up and down the platform, in his usual way, as if nothing had happened or could happen. At the end of the sermon all the people noticed that, while the ropes had been cut in pieces, yet the platform, though very heavy and spacious, had remained firm and immovable, without giving the least sign of falling. They, therefore, concluded that the cutting of the ropes was the work of the devil, to disturb the sacred function, and that God had miraculously kept up that platform and prevented the mishap which the enemy had wished for. All agreed in this opinion ; because no person had been seen to approach and cut the said ropes ; and everyone was confirmed in it when Mr. Tiburzio told them publicly the words uttered by St. Leonard in the middle of his sermon, but which he had not then rightly understood. He and all the people were, by this occurrence, convinced that, at the moment when the missionary spoke and stamped his foot on the platform, the devil had cut the ropes, but, to his confusion, the holy man had obtained from God that the platform should miraculously stand.

Whilst he was giving the missions in Porto di Fermo, the Rev. Giovanni, Pastor of Torchiano, one day saw St. Leonard raised up in the air, two feet from the ground, while he was praying before the image of the Crucifix ; from which the said priest conceived so high an esteem of him that he always regarded him, afterwards, as a saintly man and a friend of God. In Montecchio (now Treja) also, our Saint was likewise seen, while preaching in the piazza, to run to and fro on the platform without touching it, remaining raised above it a good foot, for a long time. Nay, this same priest adds, that when he first saw this from the step-ladder of the platform, where he was sitting in

order to hear the sermon, he wondered at it ; and, afterwards, to remove all doubts, watched him closely and saw, as he attested, that for a long time the Saint walked over the platform without touching it. The Reverend Rector of Dulcedo, a good and learned ecclesiastic, had gone to Porto Maurizio to visit St. Leonard, who was giving the missions there, and entered his house, softly opening the door of the room where he was, and saw him all surrounded by the brightest rays of light. He at once shut the door again, and departed without saying a word to him, reserving his talk for another occasion.

Lady Maria Teresa Mindes dei Gondi, having been taken sick, wished to confess to St. Leonard ; hence she sent her servant Antonio Burresi to call him. Antonio went and sought the Servant of God, telling the Religious that his mistress was sick, and wished for him, that she might make her confession to him ; but they answered that St. Leonard had left Florence many days previously, and was then actually in Rome. The servant brought this message to her, and she was greatly grieved at it, but afterwards resigned herself in peace, submitting to the Divine dispositions. Less than a quarter of an hour after having received the above information, the Saint appeared, and was led by the said Antonio into the chamber of the sick lady. After some time the man, who had been waiting in the hall for the Servant of God to come out from the sick-room, heard himself called by his mistress, and, running quickly to her bedside, was reprimanded by her for having falsely reported what the Religious had told him, viz., that St. Leonard was then in Rome, whilst he had just been in her room, as he, who had led him to it, must surely have seen. The servant answered that he had told her just what those Religious had said to him, viz., that St. Leonard was in Rome, and yet, notwithstanding this, he, too had seen him very well a short time before, and had led him to her room, but, to his greater surprise, he had not seen him come out, though he had never left the hall for a moment. He could not understand whence he had come out, or whither he had gone, and, consequently, he had thought that he was still inside hearing her confession. The dame was amazed at hearing all this, and caused a diligent search to be made in the convent and throughout

Florence, without finding anybody who had seen or heard of the Saint's being there or in the neighborhood. Fully astonished, she thanked the Lord for the grace and consolation she had received in so extraordinary and miraculous a manner.

In the month of January, 1742, St. Leonard, having gone to give the missions in Bocchignano in the Farfa Abbey, was lodged in the house of Captain Saverio Guadagni, who assigned to the missionaries an apartment, consisting of rooms situated on either side of a hall which divided them. After he had conducted St. Leonard to the room assigned to him, which was on the other side of those intended for his companions—the hall dividing theirs from his—the Captain loitered awhile near the fireside in the hall to chat with the archpriest of the place, leaving the Saint, who had shut himself in his room, alone. In the meantime his companions had gone to the church to prepare everything necessary for the mission ; and the Captain, remembering that he had left some writing in a drawer in a room assigned to one of the Saint's companions, went to get them. He was sure that no one could be in that room, so he unhesitatingly opened the door, but, to his greatest amazement, found St. Leonard in prayer, kneeling above the bed, surrounded by various and most beautiful flowers and fruits. Astonished and touched at the same time, he very softly closed the door, and related what he had seen to the archpriest, who likewise was no less amazed. But the wonder grew in both, when they reflected that, shortly before, they had left the holy missionary in the room assigned to him, shutting the door carefully, and that they had remained all the time in the hall through which he should necessarily have passed to go to the room where he was then seen, yet they had never heard either door open or shut. Therefore, greatly astonished and perplexed at such a wonderful occurrence, both together went to the first room, and found nobody in it ; and then going to the other room, looked through a keyhole and perceived the Servant of God still praying, surrounded by fruits and flowers, as stated above. In the meantime the Saint's companions returned from the church, reporting that all things were ready for the mission ; and the Saint started for the church to begin his sermons. But, before all, he told the Captain to

remove from his room two small pictures representing figures not altogether modest; which the Captain, at once, did. As soon as the Saint left the house, the Captain, most desirous of knowing what kind of flowers and fruits those were that he had seen in the missionary's room in the winter-time, ran quickly to it; but, with all the diligence he employed in looking and searching everywhere, he found neither fruits nor flowers of any kind, but only smelt a most sweet fragrance, which caused him to be even more amazed and full of joy.

To these things many others could be added, which were related in various places of Part First; such, for instance, as the divers punishments that God inflicted on persons who either despised, or would not listen to the words of the Saint, or to his exhortations and counsels. But, that we may not repeat these things, it will suffice to recall them, in order that everyone may understand that St. Leonard was endowed with many supernatural gifts; and that, as he preached everywhere for the honor and glory of God, so God confirmed, with prodigies and wonderful deeds, his preaching. Hence, of this new Apostle may be said what St. Mark wrote of the First Apostles: "*Prædicavit ubique, Domino cooperante, et sermonem confirmante sequentibus signis*"—"He preached everywhere, the Lord working withal, and confirming the words with the signs that followed" (Mark xvi, 20). This, besides what has already been said, will be even better confirmed by the gift or the grace of curing diseases, which he evidently possessed while living, and of which we will speak in the following chapter.

CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

Of the curing of many diseases, which God wrought through St. Leonard whilst yet living.

PIETRO BITTI, a Roman, was suffering from a windy thorn in one of his thumbs, and, finding that none of the medical applications helped him in the least, he went to see St. Leonard in the Convent of St. Bonaventure and begged him to deliver him from it. The Servant of God blessed him with a little image of the Madonna, which he always carried about, and, unbinding the finger at the same moment, it was found perfectly sound, and no sign of that disease ever again appeared in it.

Rosa Pecci, from Matelica, was overwhelmed by a terrible disease, and felt great repugnance to making it known to the doctors. She went to confession to St. Leonard, who was giving the missions there, and, having told him the anguish of her heart, was assured by him that there would be no necessity to be examined by anyone ; and, in fact, in a few days, without the aid of man or medicine, the illness disappeared, never to return.

In the Island of Corsica, while a girl of eighteen was asleep, a snake entered her mouth, and she awakened greatly frightened. She was unable to draw it out, and, having swallowed it, for some months she carried it in her stomach, to her great inconvenience and constant pain. She was compelled to carry bread with her all the time and to chew it, in order to feed the reptile, which, failing the nourishment, would bite the poor girl and give her unutterable pain, so that she could get very little sleep and consequently had become a skeleton, moving all to pity. After trying all means to free her from this harassing trouble, her father and brother took her to the Pieve di Rostino, Diocese of Mariana, where St. Leonard was to give the missions. They arrived there, after many days' journey, and the Servant of God reached the place also a little before noon, very much fatigued and perspiring, for it was the month of July. The poor girl was brought to him before the church door ; but he, wishing, as usual, to celebrate

Mass before all, told one of his companions to listen to what those poor people had to say, and in the meantime he went to the sacristy, dressed for Mass and walked to the Altar. His companion blessed the poor girl, but without any result; nay, as she went in to hear Mass, she was compelled, now and then, to masticate some bread to appease the reptile, which did not stop biting and tormenting her. Mass being over, the young girl was conducted by her people to the sacristy, and there, kneeling down, with tears in their eyes, they begged St. Leonard to vouchsafe to relieve them in their dire distress. He heard their story; and pitying that unfortunate creature, frightened and reduced to such a miserable condition, the Saint took out of his sleeve the little box containing the image of the Madonna, and, having recited three *Hail Marys*, blessed the girl with it, at which the snake became quiet at once, so that she no longer felt any pain or distress. She left Rostino with her relatives to return to her native place, and on the way home she vomited the snake in pieces. The fame of that prodigy having spread all around, the esteem and veneration of the people for the missionary increased wonderfully, and they began to call him, as has been said elsewhere, by the name of *Padre Santo*.

In the same Island of Corsica, while St. Leonard was giving the missions in Orezza, Diocese of Aleria, a girl was brought to him, who had become dumb long previously, to the great grief of her relatives, especially her mother, who wept constantly over her daughter's misfortune. She was led to the Servant of God, who blessed her with the same image of the Madonna and then celebrated the Holy Mass, at which the girl assisted. She then returned home, and in the evening went to sleep. Upon awakening, not long after, from a sound sleep, she began to talk quickly and plainly, as if she had never had any impediment in her speech. Her mother awoke at the same time, and, hearing the talk, asked who was speaking in that room. The daughter answered: "It is I who, through the missionary, have received the grace." Her parents, full of joy, on the following morning, accompanied her to the church, where they gave thanks to the Lord for the grace received; and all the people hearing this girl,

who was known to be entirely dumb, talk freely, praised God and wondered at the virtue of His Servant.

In Toffia, a town in the Farfa Abbey, St. Leonard blessed with the same image a son of Signor Antonio Calandra, who was crippled in one leg, which, on that account, had to be supported tightly with iron bars, and cured it perfectly, restoring him in an instant. At another place of the same Abbey, called Monte Santa Maria, a woman, by simply touching the eyes of her blind child with the habit of St. Leonard, found at once that his eyes opened and that his sight was perfectly restored.

Luigi Sabbatini, from Todi, had become dropsical after a long illness, and his body had swollen so much that he caused at once compassion and horror. A surgeon wished to tap him in the lower part of the stomach ; but, reflecting that the disease was too far advanced, concluded not to perform the operation, deeming it useless. Luigi had been in this dreadful condition for a year or more, when, in 1747, St. Leonard went to that city to begin the missions. One evening, while the Saint was returning home after the sermon, Luigi approached him, and the missionary, moved to pity for him, said to him : "Be devoted to the most holy Madonna ;" and, making the Sign of the Cross over his forehead and over his breast, left him. The sick man returned home and went to bed, where he began to sweat at once. He exuded so much water during the night that, on the following morning, he found himself free from all swelling, entirely well, and, to the amazement of everybody, he arose nimbly, and continued ever afterwards in that state of perfect health, without taking medicine or any other remedy.

Whilst St. Leonard was preaching the missions in Massa Lombarda, the Diocese of Imola, he was asked to visit the wife of Gabriele Zaroni, who, for five years, had been bedfast. No sooner had the Servant of God entered that house, and been seen by the patient, than she felt free from all disease, arose from her bed and was well ever afterwards. In the same town, St. Leonard went to visit the wife of Dr. Achille Gabioni, who, being dropsical, was greatly swollen ; and she was instantly cured, continuing afterwards to enjoy perfect health. When the Saint left this town to go towards Argenta, accompanied by many

people of Massa Lombarda, he was asked to enter a house where a woman, sick for a long time, wished to be blessed by him. He did so, with many of his followers, and, having blessed the woman, commanded her to arise from her bed. She at once arose, entirely cured, to the astonishment of all present, and of everybody else who afterward heard of this great and instantaneous recovery.

In 1739, while St. Leonard was giving the missions in Ancona, he went to hear the confessions of the nuns of the Monastery of Saint Palazia, one of whom, Sister Maria Rosalba Pannocchi, had been confined to bed for three and a half years, tormented by the sharpest pains in her ribs. Often she was so overcome by them that her breath totally failed her ; and, all the remedies that medical art could suggest being unavailing, her illness was deemed by the physicians absolutely incurable. One morning St. Leonard entered the monastery to hear her confession, and while he remained in her room, she, to her surprise, felt no pain ; but it at once returned as soon as the Saint left her. He came back in the afternoon to hear the other nuns. From the confessional St. Leonard sent for the Abbess, and bade her go and tell Sister Maria Rosalba that St. Vincent Ferreri had obtained for her the grace, and that, therefore, she should get up at once from her bed and come to his confessional. The Abbess, who knew the condition of that Religieuse, was amazed at hearing the command ; but, because of the esteem she entertained for the missionary, she obeyed, and, going to the room of the sick nun, found her so well and strong that she dressed without any assistance, and immediately came down without support to the confessional, where the confessor assured her (and so it came to pass) that she would never again be assailed by those pains, and that she should thank God and attend to the religious perfection. In the morning this nun had told the Servant of God that, among other ills, she suffered from a swelling which she was ashamed to show to the doctors. He assured her that it was unnecessary to show it to anybody ; and at that very instant the swelling disappeared. After some years the same nun became swollen from head to foot. Without using any remedy whatever, she had recourse to St. Leonard, who was then giving the missions in

Monte Filottrano, Diocese of Osimo, writing him a letter in which she told him her trouble. She calculated the exact time at which the Saint would receive her letter, and at that very moment all swelling disappeared, and from that day she felt well, enjoying perfect health.

While St. Leonard was on the point of leaving Matelica, after having there exercised the apostolic ministry, a blind woman of that place, Francesca Benigni, was led by her husband and son to the public road, and when the missionary came along all three knelt at his feet, begging him, with loud voices, to vouchsafe to restore her sight, so that she might earn her livelihood. At their pleading and at the sight of the poor creature, St. Leonard was deeply moved ; and, after telling her to have faith and to recite a *Hail Mary*, he gave her the image of the Madonna to kiss, and went his way. At the same moment the woman saw, and, walking without faltering and without a guide, she went to thank the most holy Virgin in the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, not far from there ; and ever afterwards, to the wonder of the whole city, she enjoyed the perfect use of her eyesight till death.

The missions in Castelnuovo di Farfa being over, the archpriest of that place, Rev. Giacinto Nobili, wished to accompany St. Leonard, out of devotion, as far as Poggio Mirteto, and, passing through Bocchignano, his native place, begged him to be pleased to stop at his home. The Saint yielded, and had hardly entered the house, when Victoria, the wife of Silvestro Nobili, came before him, with a child in her arms, called Giacomo Filippo, who was so lame and deformed that the sight of him moved all to compassion ; for, among other defects, he had a monstrous hump on his stomach and another on his back between the shoulders. Falling on her knees, weeping, the woman continued earnestly to beg of St. Leonard to touch her son, and with his blessing free him from his great deformity. Moved with compassion for the son and the mother, who pleaded, with tears, to have the grace granted her, St. Leonard turned to the people around him, and said to them : "One can see that this woman has great faith." He blessed the child, and told the mother he would soon be cured. In fact, on her awakening the following morning, she found her son perfectly straight and well, without

trace of any of those defects, which before had made him a monstrosity. In this perfect condition he continued as long as he lived, to the joy of all his relatives, and particularly of the above-mentioned archpriest, his uncle, who was present when this miracle took place, and who juridically deposed about it to the glory of God.

St. Leonard, passing one day through Collepiccolo, Diocese of Rieti, was asked to deliver a sermon there, and he consented. While on his way to the church, he was approached and entreated to afford some relief to a certain Giuseppe Federici, who, for a long time, had been confined to his bed, unable to move, because of painful rheumatism, which pierced him cruelly and deprived him of rest altogether. The Saint answered this request by saying: "Bring him to church to hear the sermon;" which was done, several men carrying him upon a chair. The sermon being over, they bore him to the sacristy, where the Minister of God blessed him with the Sign of the Cross; immediately all illness disappeared, his pains ceased, and, not only did he walk back home without assistance, but was capable, thenceforth, of enduring all the labors of the fields, never again suffering recurrence of the infirmity.

Pietro Difolco, a cloth merchant, had gone from Arpino to Rome, to buy woolen goods; but as soon as he arrived was attacked by such severe pains from gout in his feet and in his hands, that he was totally unable to do anything. He saw that the time was passing away, so one day he made an effort to get out of the house, and, leaning on a staff, walked with very great pain and difficulty. In Piazza Pollarola he met St. Leonard, who was passing through it with his companion. Pietro moved towards him to kiss his hand; but, as he could hardly walk, he would never have reached him, had not the Holy Man stopped to talk to some person. When he was near enough to him, he caught him by the cloak, which the Saint noticed, and asked him what he wished. Pietro answered that he was greatly tortured by the gout in his feet and hands, and that consequently he begged him to relieve him. When he heard this, St. Leonard made the Sign of the Cross on the poor man's knees and hands; and, all pains instantly ceasing, he was able to attend to his business, and never

afterwards did he feel those excruciating pains; as he himself later deposed under oath.

On returning, one evening, from the church to the house, while giving the missions in Arpino, St. Leonard met Giacinta Quaglieri Fiorletta, who presented to him her four-year-old child, named Gaetano, both of whose legs were crooked and whose feet were distorted, and who could not stand up, much less walk even a single step. The poor woman begged the missionary to have pity on that poor, unfortunate child, who, unable to earn his bread, would be compelled to ask alms. The Saint was moved at the sight of that poor cripple, and, after making the Sign of the Cross over him, he said to the mother: "Go, your son will get well." Giacinta returned home consoled by the hope that, according to the word of the Servant of God, in time she would obtain the grace she had asked for. She put the child to sleep, and, on the following morning, to her very great wonder and joy, she found his legs and feet perfectly sound, straight and strong, so that, after she dressed him, he began to walk quickly through the house, and, shortly after, was romping around with other children through the streets of the city, to the great amazement of those who had always seen him in his mother's arms, because of the infirmity above mentioned.

Carlo Morelli, likewise of Arpino, who had been relieved, through various medical remedies, from a skin disease, which seemed to be leprosy, grieved because his hands remained swollen and scarred. Not knowing what to do to be cured of this, he was advised to wash his hands in the water in which, some time previously, St. Leonard had washed, and which had been kept by someone as a relic. The man did so, and, as he was washing, he saw the swelling diminish and the spots disappear, so that his hands became as faultless as they had been before he was troubled by the disease.

Father Sebastiano of Zinone, a Franciscan of the Reformed Province of Turin, whilst in the Convent of the Monte in Florence, secured, for his own devotion, some of the bread left at the table of St. Leonard, keeping it with the greatest care. On the 23d of June, 1751, while this Father was in the Piano di Pistoja, he visited Giuseppe Capecchio, of the parish of St.

Angelo, who was confined to his bed with the severest pains, and such a burning fever, that it was thought he would soon die. Touched with compassion for him, Father Sebastiano gave him a fragment of this bread in a little water, and the patient quickly arose, cured, from his bed, and gave the Religious, who was going from house to house begging, some wine for the convent. Two days afterwards, meeting in Pistoja said Father Sebastiano, Giuseppe told him: "God bless you, Father; God sent you here with that blessed bread, which was to me like manna from heaven; for, no sooner did I take it, than the fever and pains passed away, and I felt at once as strong as if I had never been sick at all."

One evening, while in Pistoja, the same Father Sebastiano was sent by the Father Prior of St. Rocco's to hear the confession of a man sick unto death; and, after performing this duty, he gave him a little bit of this bread. On the following morning the sick man arose from his bed perfectly well. The same thing happened to Maria Mazzei, from Poggio Cajano, who had a very high fever, from which she was instantly freed as soon as she, too, had eaten a small piece of this bread. To many other persons God restored bodily health, at the prayers of His Servant, while he was still on earth; but now we will relate other cures which God wrought through him, after his precious death.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

Of various cures God made through the merits of St. Leonard, after his death, and of his appearing to those who invoked him.

THE virtues and gifts with which St. Leonard was adorned earned for him, while yet living, so much esteem and veneration from the people, that some called him, as it has been already repeatedly said, the "Apostolic Man," some the "New Apostle of our Century," others the "Man full of

the spirit of God," and others again the "*Padre Santo.*" This opinion of him was entertained not only by ordinary and lowly persons, but also by a great many ecclesiastics, and other persons illustrious for piety and learning. We have already mentioned elsewhere the written attestations left by several Most Eminent Cardinals and many Bishops, whose dioceses he blessed with his missions. This opinion, as soon as his death became known, caused a great number of people of all stations and conditions to flock to the Church and Convent of St. Bonaventure, in order to see and kiss his body, and to secure some relic of him. This opinion also caused many publicly to proclaim him Saint, and to have many portraits made of him at once, unknown to the Religious. These and articles used by him were sought after even by those of various distant places, and were received and kept with singular devotion. In token of the high opinion and esteem in which they held him in the city of Rome, they held a solemn funeral service for him, a few days after his death, in the Church of the Rotonda, at which a secular priest delivered a touching and appropriate funeral oration, which was later on printed, and of which this was the subject: "The Apostolic Man was very dear to men, because they rightly believed him very dear to God."

Genova also wished to show the veneration she professed for this glorious Son of hers, causing, after his death, a parchment to be printed, dedicated to the Sovereign Pontiff, upon which was engraved a shield, and in it a ship, representing the Church overthrowing heresy, and in the ship the three Theological Virtues, with inscriptions suitable to the symbol of what it was wished to say in praise of so great a Man. God confirmed the universal opinion of the virtues and sanctity of His Servant with several prodigies, which He wrought also after his death in behalf of those who had recourse to his intercession; some of which we will relate later on, limiting ourselves in this chapter to the miraculous cures following the apparition of our Saint to those who invoked him in order to obtain his assistance.

The very night St. Leonard passed to receive the eternal crown of glory, he appeared in Porto Maurizio, his birthplace, to his half-brother, who was very seriously ill on account of an

abscess in his stomach, which had reduced him to the point of death. While wide awake, his Rev. Brother appeared to him, affectionately blessing him; and, as soon as he received this blessing, he felt the abscess break, and the trouble totally disappeared, so that, in a few days, he found himself restored to perfect health.

Maddalena della Rocchetta, wife of Giacomo Arcari, Diocese of Spoleto, dwelling in Rome, had a child four months old, named Agostino, who, besides the incipient rupture with which he was born, had developed sores all over his body twenty days after he was born, which, breaking, caused the skin to stick to the clothes in which his mother wrapped him; his head also was but one mass of sores, and so horrible that it moved to compassion any beholder. Ten days after the death of St. Leonard, Maddalena saw this Saint in a dream, and, kissing his hand, begged him to cure her little infant; and it seemed to her as if he had answered that he would. Hence, full of joy and hope, on the day following, she went to the Church of St. Bonaventure, carrying the sick babe in her arms, with the intention of laying him on the tomb of the Servant of God. When she entered the church she found it greatly crowded with people, and with difficulty succeeded in approaching the main altar railings, at one side of which the tomb was situated. Maddalena, without losing courage, introduced the babe through the small openings of the railings, and asked a man, who happened to be inside of them, to lay it on the sepulchre of St. Leonard, just as she herself would have done. The man complied with her request, and the child, after being on the tomb for the space of one *Our Father*, began to smile and greatly rejoice. When he was removed from there, in the presence of all, he was found perfectly cured, both of the rupture and of all the sores, and, in addition, his head was covered with hair, although before this it had been bald.

In Arpino, Anna Maria Calandrelli, having twice miscarried, heard of a woman who had been happily delivered as soon as they had placed on her a small piece of the habit of St. Leonard, who was at the time yet living; and she at once begged of the Lord that, should she ever become pregnant, He would grant

her, through the intercession of St. Leonard, the grace happily to bring the child to light. A few months after she found herself pregnant; but, being troubled by the usual pains and a high fever, she lived in great fear of miscarrying this time also. One night, about the end of November, in the year 1751, that is to say, a few days after the death of St. Leonard (though the news of it had not yet reached Arpino), she had fallen asleep, and she felt a hand being laid on her head, which awakened her, and she found herself wholly free from her pains. As she kept a light burning in her room, she saw, at the foot of her bed, St. Leonard (whom she knew very well, because she had seen him while giving the missions), who clearly said to her: "You are already cured. Wear a piece of my habit, and fear nothing." This said, he disappeared. The woman then arose; but later on returned to her bed, and having again fallen asleep, a few moments afterwards she awoke and saw, for the second time, the same Saint on the same spot, who repeated the above words, adding that she should hear Mass every day; and then he again disappeared. She at once endeavored to secure a piece of the habit of the Servant of God from some persons in Arpino, who had it; and, as soon as she received it, she put it on with devotion, and experienced good results from wearing it; but, whenever she forgot to put it on, she at once felt the pains, and these would immediately cease, as soon as she wore it again. When the time for her deliverance arrived, after eight days of labor-pains, recommending herself to the Saint, she was happily delivered of a son, to whom, out of gratitude, she gave the name of Leonard.

Giuseppe Orsolini, of Genova, stonemason by trade, was a devotee of St. Leonard while the latter was yet living. After the Saint's death he always wore a piece of his habit and recited three *Our Fathers* and *Glorias* in his honor, deeming him a saintly man. Eight days after St. Leonard's death he placed a big ladder across a street of Genova, to prop a wall that threatened to fall down. Stefano Brenati, a friend of said stonemason, passed through the street, and seeing him seventy feet in the air, and knowing that the wall had to be propped above the ladder, and was ready to tumble down, he told him it was better to build a

scaffold and not risk so much, because if the wall would fall, he, too, was bound to be precipitated from that great height. The stonemason answered that he felt no fear whatever, as he wore a piece of the habit of our Saint, which would, even if he should fall, protect him, and preserve him from any harm. Stefano went on his way, and shortly afterward, a large piece of the wall having become detached, smashed the ladder to splinters, throwing the mason to the ground ; but invoking St. Leonard, in the fall, it seemed to him as if a Franciscan—in other words—the Saint, whom he well knew, took him by the hand as soon as he touched the ground, raised him up, extricated him from the ruins, and, as nobody else was there to help him, led him from that street. Then the stonemason made his way to the Pammattone Hospital, and had a wound in his head dressed ; but he still feared he was injured internally. This fear increased on the day following, because of sharp pains he again felt in every part of his body, which prevented him from moving. Again Giuseppe Orsolini recommended himself to St. Leonard, who appeared to him on the following night while he was asleep, and told him to go back to his work. Awakening the next day, he found himself perfectly well ; hence, he left his bed in the hospital and returned to his house, telling everybody of the prodigy, which, later on, he attested to under oath.

Sister Maria Fortunata of Jesus, a Religieuse of the Monastery of Moricone in Sabina, suffered from a terrible sickness, which caused her to fall suddenly to the ground, as if dead ; and this happened often, to the great affliction of herself and the other nuns. Once, having so fallen and been carried to bed, she recommended herself to St. Leonard, whom she had known whilst he was yet living, begging of him to free her from this serious and dangerous infirmity. When she had finished her prayer, she fell asleep, and St. Leonard, appearing to her, reproached her because she had not carried out what he had imposed on her when she made her general confession to him ; and then he assured her that she would no longer suffer from that illness, but that it would leave her with a severe headache. The woman woke up altogether free from the sickness, and never suffered from it afterwards ; but was always troubled with the

pain in her head, as the Servant of God had foretold she would be.

The Rev. Bernardino Tancioni, of Belmonte, Diocese of Rieti, a priest aged sixty-three years, suffered so from rheumatism that, for thirty-four days, he was immovably nailed to his bed, enduring the most excruciating torments, whenever necessity compelled anybody to move him. One night, as he says in his sworn statement, he thought of St. Leonard, whose image he wore, and the following morning, after he had awakened, as he continues to relate, the Saint appeared to him, visibly, upon the right side of his bed, sitting on a stool and dressed in a most beautiful habit. Sitting thus, the Saint assured him that he would forthwith be free from that malady, and that Nicola, his grandnephew, had been very much benefited in the place to which he had gone for a change of air; and adding: "Long live the Cross!" he disappeared. The man feeling, at that very moment, that he was perfectly cured, called, with great joy, his grandniece; to whom he said: "I am well and free from pain;" he then arose and went to celebrate Mass, thanking the Lord and His faithful Servant.

Maddalena Romagnoli Sciarbonieri, of Zagarolo, residing in Rome, was afflicted for several months with various arthritic pains of the fiercest kind, to relieve which all the remedies that medical art could apply had been found useless; consequently she was confined to bed, without getting any relief or rest, and shrieked so loud in her anguish that the people, passing by in the street, stopped and wondered, asking what it meant. After much suffering, she had recourse to the intercession of St. Leonard, and, on the twenty-second day of May, 1752, accompanied by her husband, she was conveyed in a carriage to the Church of St. Bonaventure. When she arrived there, she was carried by two persons (for she could not move by herself) to the sepulchre of the Saint, and there, prostrating herself with her face to the ground and her arms extended, she began to weep copiously; and, after much praying, she ended with these words: "Father Leonard, I will not depart hence, I will not arise from your sepulchre, until I have first obtained the grace." After she said this all her pains ceased at once, and getting upon

her feet, to the wonder of the by-standers, she began to walk freely through the church, visiting all its altars, and then, joyful and happy, she returned to her house. She continued in perfect health for three days, after which she was again assailed by pains, and, suffering more than ever, she complained of her misfortune. She had in her room some oil from the lamp of the Madonna of the Divine Love, but had almost forgotten it; and, after spending several days of martyrdom, during which she could not sleep, even with the opiate the physician had administered her to relieve the pain, on the morning of the 4th of June, her illness became so aggravated that she thought she was dying. Then, again, she had recourse to St. Leonard, and, raising her voice, said, with great confidence: "Father Leonard, I wish to acknowledge the grace from you. Grant it to me and give me a token thereof." Then, swallowing a small thread of his habit in some water, she immediately fell asleep, and all those who assisted her left her room, so that she might rest. This was about the eighteenth hour of the day. A few moments later, between waking and sleep, St. Leonard appeared to her, and, approaching her, took some cotton soaked in this oil, and, enjoining devotion to the most holy Virgin upon her, he made over her the Sign of the Cross, replaced the cotton, and after making a profound reverence to the image of the Madonna, which was there, in a moment he disappeared. The sick woman was wholly cured at that very instant; and, calling back all those who were in the next room, she related to them what has just been recounted, and later on, constantly enjoying perfect health, she wished to make a juridical deposition of this occurrence.

Maria, daughter of Giovanni Tubelli, of Gerano, Abbey of Subiaco, a young woman of about twenty-five years of age, having been poisoned by some herbs, was tortured for forty-eight continuous hours by the fiercest intestinal pains, and, although she was benefited by certain human remedies, and vomited part of the poison, still enough of it remained to cause her severe torture, and signs of a general laceration of the intestines had already appeared. The unhappy girl had been given up by the professors, who judged that she could not live, and was being

attended by the Very Rev. Archpriest Domenico Perelli, and the priest Rev. Francesco Pozzi, who were preparing her for a happy death, and awaited her decease. At the fourth hour of the night of the second day of August, the archpriest thought of giving to the patient a small bit of the habit of St. Leonard, which he had in his house, and at once got it, and, returning quickly with it, asked the girl whether she had ever heard of the Servant of God; upon her nodding that she had, the archpriest said to her: "Very well; I have brought you a small piece of his habit. Have faith; and if you shall receive the grace, we will make an attestation thereof and send it to Rome." Having said these words, he cut that piece of cloth into the smallest bits with the scissors, and reciting three *Hail Marys* in honor of the most blessed Virgin, and one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* in honor of the Saint, gave it to the patient in a little water, and she swallowed it. This done, she remained still for the space of about two *Credos*, with her eyes open as if ecstatic; and afterwards, she, who previously could hardly utter a broken word, even with the greatest difficulty, turned to this archpriest and his companion, and said rapidly: "I am cured already; I feel no illness whatever. Go, with God's grace, and take your rest." They were not disposed to leave her so soon; hence, they told her to thank the Servant of God, while they, remaining a little longer to converse among themselves, would not annoy her in the least. But she pleaded with them so that they were obliged to leave in order to pacify her. But before going they recited three *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys* to the Most Holy Trinity, the Litany of the Blessed Virgin, and another *Our Father* and *Hail Mary* to the Saint, in thanksgiving for such a great prodigy. On the day following she told the archpriest that, during the space of time that she had remained still with fixed eyes, as if ecstatic, she had seen St. Leonard, who, after he had told her he had come to cure her by command of God, and had exhorted her to do God's holy will in everything, and be devout to the Blessed Virgin, disappeared. Four days afterwards the Civil Court of Subiaco went to Gerano to take down the deposition of said girl, in order to find out who had given her the poison, but they did not succeed. However, they gave

her two drinks of water and oil, and the girl vomited some remnants of the poison without the least pain ; which must have been miraculous. Of this incident, which occurred in August, 1785, the physician Giovanni Battista Gentilezza, who happened to be in Gerano and attended the girl, the two priests already mentioned, and the young woman herself gave testimony under oath.

The daughter of Angela, wife of Andrea Micheletti, of Nerola in Sabina, named Maria Antonia, had suffered with an attack of the smallpox, which left her with one knee and leg in such a condition that she could not straighten herself, nor hold her head erect. On the Feast of the Purification, February 2d, 1777, Angela had recourse, with lively faith, to the intercession of St. Leonard, whom she saw in a vision towards the evening ; and she, repeating her pressing solicitations, asked him to cure her daughter, or take her with himself, as she much preferred to see her dead than so crippled as to excite pity. The following morning, to her very great joy, she found the girl perfectly cured, and went with her to Mass. From that day on the girl walked straight.

In Posticciola, of Sabina, the priest, Rev. Domenico, a native of Borgo San Pietro, not far from Posticciola, after a long illness, was assailed by a severe sore throat, in consequence of which he was brought to the point of death. He recommended himself to St. Leonard, who appeared to him the following night, blessed him on the forehead and the throat ; and on awakening, shortly after, he found himself wholly free from the pain and perfectly well.

The priest Angelo Manni, of Terni, attests, also, that, having, for several months, suffered a very acute pain in his right side, accompanied by fever and other ills, from the effects of which, according to the opinion of the physicians, he was sure to die ; after having tried all human remedies in vain, he was cured in the following manner : One day, while he was rushing about the house in a delirious frenzy, a piece of a handkerchief that had belonged to St. Leonard was given to him, and he devoutly applied it to the sore side, and then threw himself on his bed, face downward, with his feet, however, touching the floor. While in this position, he felt as if a hand had been

placed on his forehead, and he thought he heard a voice telling him to get up. He arose at once to his feet, and found himself free from every ill; so that, walking around the house without any difficulty, he cried out, full of joy: "I am healed! I am healed! And it is Father Leonard who freed me from the pain." He afterwards made the statement that he never suffered from that pain any more.

We will add, in conclusion, the assertion of a very learned and pious confessor, viz., that St. Leonard appeared to one of his own penitents (whose name he refused to divulge), accompanied by a great number of souls, saved through him (the Saint), and said to her: "See how God has desired to reward His own gifts; for His gift it was, the capacity to preach—His, the strength—His, the science—His, the voice also—and His, everything. But He has rewarded all of these things, as if they were mine own."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

Other miraculous cures wrought by St. Leonard after his death.

MARIA MADDALENA PALLARI, of Pergola, who was dwelling in Rome, had suffered for eight years from a diseased limb, which was swollen to the knee, and which crippled her so that she could not walk, except with the greatest inconvenience and pain. She went to the sepulchre of St. Leonard, and there, while praying, the swelling instantly disappeared, the pain ceased altogether, and the limb having been restored to its normal, healthy condition, she returned perfectly cured to her own home.

In Torri, in the Abbey of San Salvatore Maggiore, the wife of a stonemason, Antonio Lepori, was assailed by the fiercest pains, from which everybody thought she would shortly die; but, after having proven that every human remedy was of no avail, by somebody's advice, she applied to the sore spot a piece

of the habit of St. Leonard, and immediately all pain ceased. Soon afterwards, having lost this relic, she was again attacked by the same pains; but when she found it and applied it for the second time, the pains stopped as formerly. This was tried several times, to the amazement of the by-standers; therefore, the woman, henceforth, constantly wore that piece of the habit, and was never more molested by those pains.

A splinter of iron entered the hand of Giuseppe Raffi, of Fara, a tailor by trade, while he was trying to strike a dog with a bar, and his hand quickly turned black, gangrene having set in. It grew worse and worse, and it was decided to amputate it. In his fear and anguish he touched the sore with a little bit of the habit of St. Leonard, with so much confidence in his intercession, that the sore instantly disappeared, the hand returned to its former healthy condition, and, to his sovereign joy and wonder, he found himself completely cured.

Mother Chiara Francesca Tuani, a Religieuse of the Monastery of St. Chiara, in Sarzana, had, from the time she entered the convent as a boarder, been suffering from a fistula in her left foot, which was so malignant that, though treated from its beginning with knife and fire, still it was growing worse, and giving great trouble. When she became Abbess the fistula grew so deep that the bone of the foot became bare, and she could no longer walk; hence, it was imperative for her to submit again to treatment. But as this did not avail in the least, she had recourse to the intercession of St. Leonard, and, at the same time, applied to the sore a small piece of the handkerchief with which the Servant of God used to wipe off the perspiration. This done, she slept peacefully the following night—a thing she had not done for a long time before; and in the morning she found herself as well as if she had never suffered any illness.

Maria Grossi, of Sambuci, dwelling in Rome, after having given birth to a child, noticed that her right breast was swollen, and felt such excessive pain that the surgeon deemed it necessary to cut it; but, after the operation, the milk flowed from the wound, two openings appearing in the breast, and she grew worse every day, her breast becoming one sore. After several months' treatment she seemed to be healed; but, on the occa-

sion of a new birth, the sore reopened and the milk again flowed from the wound, as formerly, while, at the same time, she felt excessive pain. Then the patient, without using any natural remedy, recommended herself with a lively faith to St. Leonard, and taking a small bit of his habit, applied it, one evening, to her breast, tying it with a bandage. The pain at once subsided, so that she could rest the entire night ; and in the morning, not feeling the least pain, she took the bandages off and found the sore entirely healed, only a little mark remaining to attest the grace received ; not even the scar, which naturally should have been left there, was to be seen.

Lady Maria Giovanna, wife of Signor Paolo Panizza, dwelling in Masserano, Diocese of Vercelli, was troubled periodically, for eight years, with nervous spasms, which caused her great torture. After she had made use of many remedies and had consulted several professors, her disease was pronounced chronic and incurable, and for four months she had been so troubled by such various and excessive pains that she had been reduced to a mere skeleton. At that time a Religious happened to pass by her house, who gave her a small piece of the habit of St. Leonard, and a morsel of bread left over by him, when alive. She, in her great agony, ate the bread and put on the piece of the habit, and instantly felt a general quickening of her blood, recovered her health at once, and remained wholly free from pains as long as she lived.

In the city of Aquila, a boy three years old, the nephew of a priest and physician, Rev. Venanzio De-Bernardis, was attacked by a most acute fever which, in its fifth recurrence, reduced him to the point of death ; and his parents and uncle already bewailed him as dead. Whilst the child was in this desperate condition and speechless, his Reverend uncle recommended him to St. Leonard, promising, should he obtain the grace, to make a public statement of it. Then he took a relic of the Saint, which he had in his house, and, having recited three *Paters* and *Aves*, signed his dying nephew with it. Immediately the boy opened his eyes, spoke freely, asked for something to eat, insisted on getting up and ran around the house, to the amazement of all those who were present. His uncle, having felt his pulse, found

him without fever and perfectly well ; and thus he continued to be afterwards, as his uncle deposed in the statement he made subsequently, as he had promised to make.

Sister Costante Maria Salvatori, a nun of Matelica, in the Monastery of the Nunziata and St. Adriano, of the Order of St. Benedict, had been accidentally struck, in 1744, by a heavy object which had fallen from above. In the spot where she was injured, a tumor, as large as an egg, was formed, which, not long after, disappeared. Some time after this she was again struck, with great force, in the head by a window, while she was trying to open it. This blow caused her excessive pains and affected her mind, so that she would wander aimlessly throughout the monastery, like an idiot. Finally, she became so reduced that she could not bear the least noise ; she could not walk without the aid of two sticks ; and was subject to attacks of vomiting, suffering so, at times, that it was thought she would not survive. Some years later another weight, falling on her head, caused her to swoon, and she was carried insensible to her bed, to which she was confined for a long time ; her troubles growing worse day by day, they were diagnosed by the attending physician as incurable. In the meantime the news of the death of St. Leonard having reached Matelica, she earnestly recommended herself to his intercession, and having received from Rome a piece of his habit, she applied it to her ears, for the greatest pain she suffered was the torture caused by the least noise, which torture was so great that she would fall as if dead. As soon as the application was made, she felt, according to her testimony, as if many ants were walking about her forehead, and after some sneezing, she felt herself totally free from all illness, walked through all the workshops of the monastery, where they were making much noise, and finally went to the choir with other nuns, who were all wonder-struck to hear her singing the Psalms in a high-pitched voice, without suffering then, or afterwards, any more pain.

In Pofi, Diocese of Veroli, Marcantonio Minna was assailed by malignant fever, and, after having employed all natural remedies in vain, was given up by the doctor. He received the last Sacraments, and every moment was expected to die. Somebody tied a small piece of the habit of St. Leonard to his arm, implor-

ing the Saint's help ; and, shortly after, he was entirely cured, to the astonishment of the doctor, who wished to make an authentic statement of the fact.

In Rome, Violante Maidè, having gangrene in one of her legs, which had eaten into the flesh, so that a hole had been formed large enough to hold a small loaf of bread, was given up by the surgeon, because, after having uselessly applied a great many remedies, he judged it incurable. The patient, reduced to such a strait, turned with confidence to St. Leonard, and begged of him to heal her, promising, if she obtained the grace, to make a sworn statement of it, and to bring a silver leg to his sepulchre. Then she applied a piece of his habit to the sore, and immediately all pain ceased ; and in a short time, being perfectly healed, she faithfully fulfilled both her promises.

Don Carlo Maria Carpano Busti, of Villicino, Diocese of Milan, for ten years and more was troubled, in the spring and every time he undertook any little journey, with a violent sore throat, for which the physicians prescribed what remedies they deemed necessary. He had heard of the sanctity of St. Leonard, and of the graces which, through his merits, God dispensed. One evening, in the beginning of February, 1756, just at the time he was afflicted by this infirmity, he began to read the Life of the Saint ; and, in reading, he felt so confident of being cured through his intercession that he immediately knelt, and, pleading for the grace, he at once perfectly recovered, and never again, even after a long and severe journey taken on foot, did he suffer from that malady ; and of this he wished to make an authentic statement.

In Genova, Catherine Carozzina was tormented for the space of twelve years by a fierce malady, which caused her, at times, to lose her senses for twelve consecutive hours, and, more than once, she found herself at the point of death. The professors of medicine, after having made use of all the remedies suggested by their art, but without any benefit whatever, were at a loss to know what else to do. In the month of January, 1752, the patient grew worse, an acute headache and a copious vomit of blood being added to the old malady. Therefore, the attending physician pronounced all hope gone. Catherine, hearing this,

had recourse to the intercession of St. Leonard, asking of God, through him, her health; and having secured a piece of his habit, she put it on with lively faith, and immediately was freed from all illness, at once arising from her bed, as she, through gratitude, testified under oath.

Sister Maria Teresa Eleonora Boccella, a nun of the Monastery of St. Niccolò Novello, in Lucca, after having been lame for ten years, and an epileptic, could not find any relief in any human remedy. Finally, on the night of October 21st, 1769, having been attacked by a most violent fever, she was about to die. In this plight she turned with confidence to St. Leonard, and begged of him to succor her in her grave need, asking him to remember the promise he had, when living, made to her, that he would help her when he went into Paradise; and, lo! on the following morning she found herself free and cured of all disease. All this is related by the same Religieuse in two sonnets that she composed, in the first of which she describes the nature of her illness, and in the second she relates her prodigious cure, and she says that after having recommended herself to the Saint, reminding him of his promise, she remained as if in a lethargy. She thus concludes the sonnet:

> "I did not, then, know what became of me;
> But this do I know well, that I received a full grace,
> And well I arose at the breaking of dawn."

Giuseppe, a boy of seven years, the son of Benedetto Gai, a Roman, suffered from a tumor as big as an ordinary apple in his right arm, which caused him intense pain, and he was compelled, after some months, to submit to an operation, in consequence of which much pus and other putrid matter exuded. Though the wound, after some time, yielding to medicaments, healed up, still there was an opening left in the middle of it, from which periodically the corruption oozed out. Finally, the father having applied in vain all known remedies, and hearing from various professors whom he had called in to examine his son's disease, that it had turned into a fistula which could not be cured, even by a surgical operation, threw aside all human remedies, and, dismissing all the professors, recommended him-

self to St. Leonard. The poor boy had already been in that condition for two years, with the addition, at times, of the most violent fevers, which made him delirious. One evening the disease had reached its height, and the father, exhorting the boy to have faith, recited one *Pater*, *Ave* and *Gloria* to the Saint, and blessed him with the relic and the image of the same, placing both under his pillow. The following morning the boy awoke entirely cured, the mouth of the fistula being so perfectly closed and healed up that the boy insisted upon getting up then and there and dressing, which he did; and neither then, nor at any time afterwards, did he feel any pain or inconvenience in that arm.

It was two years since Elizabeth Notarantonio Morelli, of Arpino, was cruelly tormented, in one of her knees by a freezing pain, which prevented her from moving a step by herself, so that she needed somebody to lean upon in order to move. Even then she could only do so with the greatest difficulty and the sharpest pain. In the month of February, 1752, she was assailed by fiercer pains than usual, and invoked the help of St. Leonard, for all human remedies had availed her nothing; then, asking for a piece of wool, which he had used whilst alive, she applied it to the sore knee, when immediately all pain ceased; and she who, till then, had cried aloud from pain, not able to stir, now, filled with joy, began to walk freely through the house, all by-standers being amazed, and particularly the physician, who, together with her, wished to make a sworn statement of the prodigy.

Brother Atanasio, from Ormea, a lay Religious of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, had been troubled for nearly a year by many attacks of fevers, and finally his body became swollen, and for eight days he had been unable to pass any water. The physicians declared that he was suffering from an incurable kidney disease, and that human remedies could afford no relief. Being advised to have recourse to the intercession of St. Leonard, for whose cause he had labored much, he ate a small piece of his habit, and applied another piece, together with his portrait, by a bandage to his loins, and immediately he began to pass the water in such a quantity that, the swelling gradually diminishing,

in a short time he found himself well, and remained afterwards wholly cured.

In Tivoli, Lady Eugenia, Visconti de'Cesari, being delirious from a very high fever, was consequently impeded in her delivery, and her mother and the midwife assisting her were in great fear lest she would succumb or the child be in danger. In such an extremity they appealed to St. Leonard, and the midwife herself, taking in her hand a picture of St. Leonard, said these precise words: "Father Leonard, if thou art a Saint, show it now, by causing this creature to come to light that, at least, it may receive the water of baptism." Having said this, she no sooner had applied the portrait to the woman than she was at once happily delivered of twins of five or six months, one alive, and the other, after several tests and trials, regarded as dead. They baptized the one, and, grieving for the other as dead, they again had recourse to the Saint, and, taking his image and placing it on its little body, the same midwife said: "Father Leonard, since thou hast performed one miracle, perform the other as well, and make known to us whether this creature is alive." She had hardly uttered these words when the little babe opened its mouth; hence it was christened at once, and lived half an hour longer than the first one; all giving thanks to God that, through the merits of His Servant, two souls had been saved.

Anna Vittoria Marchetti, a girl boarding at the Monastery of the Santi Quattro Coronati, in Rome, was troubled for the space of three years by various diseases, and among these by a fever, which would last two or three months at a time, and though it ceased then, still the patient never regained her strength. Nay, the physician declared that she seemed more ill after the fever left her, than during the time she was actually afflicted by it. On the 15th of October, 1751, she was assailed by it with great violence, and no remedies that were applied could check it; nay, obstinately persisting, it caused such disturbances in her system—strictures of the stomach, frequent swoons, sleeplessness, great loathing for food, contractions of the muscles and nerves—that she seemed to be a real epileptic; and finally phthisis became apparent. The strongest and most efficacious remedies did not avail her, and, the disease growing worse, she became shrunken

and paralyzed, particularly in the knees and legs, so that she could not stand at all, nor arise from her bed, without the assistance of crutches, or the support of several people; otherwise she would at once fall to the ground. This, by the physicians, was pronounced paralysis, which was joined to a total lack of motion and feeling in the legs, and so great an emaciation that the poor girl was an object of pity to every beholder, as she looked like a skeleton. Eight months had already elapsed since this poor creature was oppressed by so many ills, and she was in such a pitiful state, when, on the morning of Ascension Day, which in that year, 1752, fell on the 11th of May, the sacristan, Sister Maria Serafina Petruccioli, described to Father Martino, of Vallecorsa, a Religious of the Convent of St. Bonaventure, then confessor extraordinary at the above monastery, the extent of the maladies under which this girl was pining; and he begged this sacristan to tell the patient to have recourse to the Saint. The Religieuse obeyed, and repeated to the sick girl what Father Martino had said; and, after having done this, she left the room immediately. Anna Vittoria remained alone, excited herself to a lively faith, and taking an image of the Saint which she kept near her bed, applied it to her limbs, and in that very act felt an internal assurance of being altogether cured. In the meantime a nun came in, and Anna Vittoria asked her for her clothes; as soon as these were handed to her, she, jumping out of her bed without help, dressed without assistance, immediately, and found herself perfectly free and cured of all her diseases; and, moreover, she recuperated all her strength, flesh and color, so that, with a florid and energetic appearance, she began to run around through the dormitories, and, afterwards, came down to where the girls and the nuns were assembled, telling them first what had happened to her; and then she went to her confessor, to whom she also narrated the facts. They all remained astounded and stunned from wonder, having seen her, shortly before, almost expiring and looking like a corpse; and now finding her healthy, ruddy and robust, as if she had never suffered from any disease. On the day following, Dr. Francesco Raniero Parazzani, physician ordinary of the monastery, who had attended her, went to visit her, and was much

surprised to find her cured. The better to assure himself of it, he ordered that all medical appliances should be done away with, and that she should take up the routine life of the institution, and do everything that was required of the other young lady boarders. This was promptly done ; and, as she was found by him, as well as by other professors, always well and in the best of health, they, together with the nuns and the young ladies, wished to make a public and solemn statement of it, to the glory of God and of His Servant.

Sinforosa Betti, of Leprignano, the wife of Alessandro Pezza, in the month of January, 1787, going from his native town to Civitella San Paolo, in traversing a forest, met with a thorny bush, and was wounded in the right leg below the knee by a sharp thorn. Though she felt the pain and saw the blood coming out of the wound, still she continued on her journey. When she returned home she gave herself no thought of this wound, until it became swollen, inflamed, and discharged blood and pus. The sore spread as the discharge became greater, and the poison infected every part of the body that it touched. Four or five days afterward, in mistake, she drew the right stocking, which was soaked with blood and corruption, upon the left leg, thus infecting it also. Little by little these sores grew larger, and extended from the knee to the foot, making openings here and there, with ridges and hard round spots, between which so much putrid matter constantly flowed, that the people would run away from the poor woman, being unable to endure the stench. For some time she did not apply any remedy ; but, as the malady increased and became extremely painful in both legs, she called in the surgeon, who had no sooner seen and examined them than he told the patient the disease was incurable, and consequently that she would have to suffer from it until her death. Still, in order to ease her pain, correct the acid of the blood and check the poison in her body, he prescribed some medicine to be taken inwardly, and also outward appliances ; but, as she made no use of them at all, the old sore widened and deepened more every day, and new ones formed, while from both continually oozed a corroding and offensive matter. Her legs seemed like two pillars ; for where they were not sore, they were all swollen and

inflamed, causing the unhappy woman the severest pain. In the month of July, 1788, she went to Rome, and had her sores examined by another surgeon, who also pronounced them incurable, yet he prescribed some salve just to mitigate the sharpness of the pain; but she, after having applied it, found it useless. She then used rhubarb leaves as a salve, but it was of no benefit, as the sores grew exacerbated and horrible to look at every day. The poor sick woman remained in this condition till the month of September, 1789, when she returned to Rome, and, with Felicia Perini, her companion, she went, on the 19th of that month, to the Church of St. Bonaventure, to pray to St. Leonard for her recovery. On the way and in the church she said no other prayer than this: "O my Saint, do me the favor to heal these legs for me;" for, on account of the pain, according to her own deposition, she could not even recite one *Our Father*. While thus praying, she felt the pain, first in one leg and then in the other, cease, and a very great erosion follow, the sign of the desired recovery. Therefore, leaving the church, she quickly went to the house at which she was stopping. She slept delightfully during the whole night, and, without feeling any more pain and inconvenience whatsoever, on the day following, she returned to Leprignano, her native place. As soon as she arrived there, she took off her stockings, and found that her limbs were perfectly cured; for the bandages, with all the pus and the dried rhubarb leaves, fell off without being touched. To her amazement and satisfaction she saw that all the sores had disappeared, as well as the swelling and the inflammation, and that the skin had grown clear and smooth, having recovered its natural, healthy appearance. She at once called her husband, who, at that sight, was full of wonder, as were also the pious mothers of the place and other women who had seen the sores. All praised the Lord, Who, through the merits of His Servant, had wrought such a prodigious and instantaneous cure from this terrible and inveterate disease.

The Sovereign Pontiff Pius VI published a Decree of Approbation of these last two prodigies, proposed and examined according to the usual most rigid rules of the Sacred Congregation of Rites. On August 2d, 1795, on which day the Holy Father

proceeded to the Convent of St. Bonaventure, and caused the above publication to be made in the same room from which St. Leonard had taken his flight to Paradise, leaving to us so many beautiful examples for our imitation, and the assurance that we may obtain from Heaven, through his merits and his intercession, graces and favors of all kinds.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

The two Miracles approved for the Canonization.

LAURA CARDELLI, fourteen years old, both of whose parents were dead, was living with her sister in the Conservatory of the Mendicants of Rome. While she was weaving, she accidentally struck her breast with the shuttle, with such violence that blood began to flow from her mouth. Great pain followed in her right side, a cough and fever also developed, with spitting of blood—all of which soon made people believe she was affected with consumption. Having been sent, as a last resort, away from home for a change of air, she seemed to have fully recovered. But when she returned to the Conservatory, she suddenly felt a sharp pain in the right loin, which, increasing more and more, caused the femur, the stomach and the right leg to grow torpid. She could not urinate, except artificially ; she felt nausea at food, suffered insomnia, acute pains, constant inflammation, vomiting, and, with the urine, passed pus and blood. She was bedfast for fifteen months, and nothing was left for her but death, when one of the Mistresses of the Pious Place, Margherita Rubbi, moved to compassion by her pitiable state, suggested to her to have recourse to Heaven, for all was over for her here on earth. She proposed that she make a Novena in honor of the Venerable Father Leonard, whose Beatification had already been decreed. Laura was pleased with the suggestion, and, having secured an image of the Servant of God, began the pious practice ; but she did not feel any benefit from it. She swallowed a little bit of his habit ; but she grew worse. About midnight of

the thirty-first day of March, 1796, she recited the customary prayer in honor of the Servant of God, and fell asleep. In the midst of her sleep she saw him appearing before her and asking her whether she knew him ; then, reproaching her for her little faith, he foretold something that was, one day, to happen to her. Then taking her by the hand, and blessing her in the Name of the Most Holy Trinity, he commanded her to arise from her bed. The woman awoke and saw at her bedside the glorious Missionary, who handed her the Crucifix to kiss, and, repeating the command that she should arise from her bed, disappeared.

Crying with delight and wonder, Laura obeyed. One of her companions, named Gioacchina Angelini, ran to her from the next room upon hearing her cries, and, seeing her out of her bed, thought this had happened in consequence of her convulsions, and insisted upon her returning to bed again. Laura refused, and told her of the apparition that had taken place, and of the grace granted her ; and, as a proof of it all, she began to walk well and freely. The news of this spread through the Conservatory ; all the girls wished to make sure of the miracle with their own eyes, and ran with Laura to the interior chapel to render thanks to God. The professors of medicine, on the following day, attested the prodigy, which was being related throughout the entire city ; and all who visited Laura became so many witnesses of her recovery.

Elizabeth Bouzourò, of Constantinople, a married woman, forty-eight years old, healthy and robust, suffered from an alteration of the humors, in the summer of 1848, and shortly after a small tumor, the size of a pea, appeared in her right breast ; but it did not increase for two months, nor cause her any trouble or pain ; so that she did not mention it to a physician, nor did she apply any salve to it. Later on, however, it grew larger, until it had reached the size of a nut, when it began to sting her sharply. Within the space of eighteen months the tumor grew gradually—first to the volume of a goose's egg, and then to the size of an orange. It was as hard as a stone, uneven, protruding from the breast, with the skin drawn over it ; while on its surface the veins, swollen and purple, could be seen, and it gave her the sharpest pains. From its centre, roots extended to the gland under the

right armpit, which appeared engorged and reflected the sharp pains of the breast. Because of this the arm became swollen and painful, heavy and motionless, and there was no longer any room to doubt that the infection had spread to the whole body of the wretched woman. This was evidenced by the miserable condition to which she appeared to have been reduced. She gradually lost all her strength, could not move a step without help, and was extremely emaciated. Her face had become greatly pinched, and had assumed the color of straw, presenting the appearance of a corpse. The first physician who visited her, having noticed these evident and serious symptoms, did not hesitate to pronounce the terrible disease a scirrhus in the right mammary gland, which had developed into a cancer. In this diagnosis five other specialists among doctors and surgeons of the city of Constantinople, who visited her, concurred, after having very carefully examined her, and all foretold her sure and imminent death. The said Elizabeth Bouzourò had employed no remedy of any efficacy during the long course of her malady, neither had she undertaken any regular treatment; and none could be of any value, for a disease of this nature was incurable. The six physicians, therefore, though as expert in the healing science as any ever were, could prescribe nothing to relieve the poor sufferer, except to attempt the extirpation of the cancer, which, however, would be likely to be, as usual, useless—nay, harmful; consequently, after more mature consideration, this was not attempted.

Thus the case of this sick woman being hopeless on account of the impotence of all human means, a ray of hope broke out upon her by turning to the heavenly protection. A Religious of the Order of Reformed Friars of St. Francis, who attended her spiritually, came to her, saying: "I have brought to you a physician who will heal you." The patient thought he meant a foreign physician; but the Religious, taking out a relic of the habit of St. Leonard of Port Maurice, added: "This is the physician I desire to speak of." The woman then listened to the narration of various graces obtained through the invocation of the Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, and having received the relic, full of confidence, she applied it to the seat of the

disease. A few moments later she felt as if cool water were running all over the diseased side, and, at once obtaining relief, she calmly went to sleep. On her awakening, she noticed a great change ; and with fear she placed her hand on her breast, but was at once assured that all had returned to its perfect, natural state. In a fit of joy she called to her husband, exclaiming that she was cured. He would not believe her word ; but, forced by his affection, he ran, he saw, he touched with his own hand the truth of the wonderful prodigy. He and she, then, broke out into acts of fervent thanksgiving to God, Who, having accepted the mediation of His beloved Servant, had vouchsafed to manifest His Omnipotence under the very eyes of those blind followers of Mohammed, and to thus render that couple happy because of the grace obtained.

Elizabeth Bouzourò, who, shortly before, had no hope whatever, arose early in the morning, and again having satisfied herself of the disappearance of the disease, with all its serious results, felt strong and healthy, having recovered in an instant her former well-being. She then was very anxious to make known the great wonder wrought by the Lord, and told as many as she could reach of the prodigious event. All who heard of it were struck with amazement at the unexpected recovery of this woman. She continued to enjoy the most florid health, and still lives, grateful for the grace received, a living witness of the protection of the Blessed Leonard on the occasion of his Solemn Canonization.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD.

Acts of the Cause of the Canonization of the Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice.

THE Blessed Leonard having been raised to the honor of the Altars, with solemn pomp, in the Vatican Basilica, on the 19th of June, 1796, confidence in his power was enkindled more and more in the immense number of his devout clients, who already invoked him as their Patron. Nor did a

long space of time elapse before the renown of the luminous prodigies obtained through the invocation of the newly Beatified began to spread in every direction. Thus it was that, when the celebration was over, many of the most distinguished personages presented pressing petitions to the Sovereign Pontiff Pius VI that he would condescend to take up the Cause of the Canonization. Yielding to their wishes, the same year, on the 10th of September, in the Ordinary Congregation of the Sacred Rites, it was resolved to resume it; and, having published the decree on the 17th of the same month, the Commission was appointed by the said Pontiff.

The hope of carrying this Process to a happy conclusion appeared well founded; inasmuch as a splendid Miracle, which had taken place right here in Rome, was to be inquired into according to usual juridical forms, the Cardinal Vicar having granted the necessary faculties for this purpose on the 23d of November. And when the acts had been taken up, these were examined so quickly that, on the 22d of July, 1797, with an appropriate decree, the formal opening of the Process was made.

But, on account of some additional particulars, the course of the Cause was checked; and, excepting for the appointing of Cardinal Pier Francesco Galeffi to take the place of the deceased Cardinal Giovanni Archinto as a Postulator of the Cause, on the 17th of November, 1804, nothing was done in the matter, until March 12th, 1836, when, in an Ordinary Congregation, the validity of this Process was examined and confirmed. Continuing then the Cause with despatch, a new election of the Postulator followed, and, on the 17th of November, 1837, this office was assumed by Cardinal Gian Francesco Falzacappa. When, therefore, the customary documents had been arranged, on the 3d of April of the year following, in the Anti-Preparatory Congregation the above-related Miracle was discussed at the residence of the Postulator himself, who, two days later, named the Expert; who, according to the principles of the salutary art, was to give his opinion as to its truth. Without delay, on the 29th of December of said year, it was possible to call together at the Vatican the Cardinals and Consultors in Congregation Preparatory; and, afterwards, on the 26th of February, 1839, in the Congregation General,

before Pope Gregory XVI, who, having approved this Miracle, by a decree published at the Apostolic Palace in the Vatican, on the 16th of April, proclaimed its authenticity.

After this the Cause of the Canonization of the Blessed Leonard suffered a new delay, during which those changes took place that human frailty is heir to. That is to say: The Postulator of the Cause, Father Gian Gualberto, of Camajore, was succeeded by Father Salvatore, of Ormea, actual Provincial Guardian in Rome of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure, with power of attorney despatched on the 7th of February, 1848; and Cardinal Luigi Lambruschini chosen Postulator from the first day of January, 1841, was replaced by Cardinal Lodovico Altieri, on the 12th of December, 1861.

And now the Cause seemed to enter a period of accelerated action; for, this Postulator having heard that, many years before, a stupendous prodigy had taken place in Constantinople, through the mediation of the Blessed Leonard, endeavored to gather all the proofs of it, in order to undertake the examination of the same. He succeeded in his undertaking; for, passing from act to act, in the course of four years, he saw the Cause brought to its happy conclusion. In fact, having secured the Remissorial Letters for the Vicar Apostolic of said city, on the 26th of June, 1862, for the construction of the Process, this was remitted, already complete, from said Vicar Apostolic in the following year, so that it could be opened on the 7th day of December. When, therefore, he had proposed its validity to the examination of the Ordinary Congregation, it was sanctioned by a Decree of the 14th.

The Advocate of the Causes of the Congregation of the Sacred Rites, Prof. Rev. Giacomo Arrighi, who, even from the year 1838, had assumed the defense of the Cause of the Blessed Leonard, was solicitous to prepare the answers to the difficulties advanced by Monsignor Promoter of the Faith for the Anti-Preparatory Congregation, held September 5th, 1865, before the Most Eminent Cardinal, who, on the 20th of October, appointed two Experts, one a Physician, and the other a Surgeon, who were rigorously to examine the proposed Miracle, and give, according to truth, their vote upon it. These votes were received,

the new answers to the new animadversions were made ready, and then the Cause was brought up for discussion in the Preparatory Congregation on the 10th of April, 1866 ; and, on the 26th of June, in the General Congregation, in the August Presence of His Holiness our Lord Pius IX. This examination, always diligent and severe, could not harm the goodness of the Cause, which rather met with the hoped-for success in the publication of the Decree of approval given by His Holiness, on the second day of August of the same year, in the Church of the Stigmata of St. Francis, with extraordinary solemnity. Besides those whose office it was to take part in the ceremonies, and the Religious of St. Bonaventure's, the whole body of that Archconfraternity was present, together with an immense multitude of people, drawn there by the recurrence, on the same day, of the Indulgence of the Portiuncula, and, in addition, by the issuing of the above Decree.

Nothing else remained now to be done but to take the last step prescribed by the Rules, viz., to convene again the Cardinals and the Consultors of the said Congregation before the Sovereign Pontiff, that they might, singly, give their vote on the question, whether it could be prosecuted with safety to the Canonization of the Blessed Leonard. This being done, on the 18th of September, it became evident that all had given a favorable vote, from the fact that His Holiness, on the 4th of October, was pleased to publish the relative Decree. This promulgation became the more memorable on account of the special adjuncts accompanying it. In fact it was associated with that of other Decrees, viz., that of the Cause of the Canonization of the Blessed Paul of the Cross, and that of the Beatification of the Venerable Benedetto of Urbino ; and it took place on the day sacred to the glories of St. Francis, in whose family the Blessed Leonard was enrolled, and in the presence of the Illustrious Chapter of the Vatican Basilica, in the Chapel of its Choir, where, in a large picture, the Patriarch of Assisi is venerated.

Thus the last of the acts within the province of the Congregation of the Sacred Rites in decreeing honor and cult to the Servants of God, heroes of virtues, was there accomplished,

where it was going to be linked with the Feast of the Canonization, which would soon shine with unusual splendor.

Now, looking back again at the apostolic labors of St. Leonard and his heroic virtues, described in this volume, we may justly repeat what was already publicly said of him by Monsignor Pieragostini, Bishop of St. Severino, when, in 1740, the great Apostolic Missionary went there to give the missions. This worthy prelate, in the Homily he recited at that time in honor of the most holy Virgin, said that Father Leonard was a man sent by God to root out the vices and plant the virtues; that, according to the etymology of his name, he was a Lion (*Leo*), who terrified hell with his roars and healed the souls diseased through sin; and, at the same time, he was Spikenard (*Nardo*), who, by his fragrance, delighted the whole Church. He condensed and concluded this truth with these two verses:

Præco Leo-nardus, LEO *profert ore salutem:*
NARDUS *virtutum replet odore domum.*

(The Preacher Leonard, by his mouth, as *Leo* (Lion), proffers salvation: As Spikenard (*Nardus*), with the odor of virtues, he fills the habitation.)

OREMUS:

Deus, qui in obstinatis peccatorum cordibus ad pœnitentiam flectendis Beatum Leonardum Confessorem tuum opere ac sermone potentem effecisti, da, quæsumus, ut per ejus preces et merita e cordibus nostris contritionis lacrymas elicere valeamus. Per Dominum nostrum, etc.

LET US PRAY:

O God, Who, in order to move the hearts of obstinate sinners to repentance, hast made the Blessed Leonard, Thy Confessor, powerful in deed and word, grant us, we beseech Thee, that, through his prayers and merits, we may draw from our hearts tears of contrition. Through our Lord, etc.

Church, School, Orphan Asylum, and Rectory of St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi.

MONTROSE (FORMERLY MARRIOTT) STREET, PHILADELPHIA.

APPENDIX I.

PROPONIMENTI. (1)

Resolutions of St. Leonard of Porto-Maurizio.

"*Resolutions made during the Spiritual Retreats that once or twice a year I had the happiness to make at the holy Solitude of Sta. Maria dell' Incontro, in Tuscany, begun in the year 1717, renewed with greater fervor in the year 1735,—and for the last time reconfirmed in 1745, in the Convent of the Monte in Genova.*"

THE Divine Goodness, which always calls me to a more intimate intercourse and a more interior dealing with the One and Triune God, looked at with a lively faith in the centre of my soul, vouchsafed to stimulate me even more during the exercises made this year, 1745. And, having made them as if they were my last, knowing full well that death is coming nearer and nearer, I resolved to renew and confirm all the Resolutions made at other times, and, with the blessing of my Spiritual Father and the assistance of the Divine Grace, I am most determined to carry them out entirely and in every particular, without omitting even one of them. And whenever it may happen that one is transgressed, I will at once impose a penance upon myself, either reciting the *Miserere*, or making the Sign of the Cross with my tongue on the floor, or the like. To this end I invoke the help of Almighty God, the assistance of Mary, my Most Holy Mother, of St. Vincent Ferreri, my advocate, and particularly of my Seraphic Father St. Francis, whom I propose to imitate, as closely as I shall be able, in all the holy virtues, asking, for this purpose, his paternal benediction.

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(1) This translation is made from "Manuale della Vita Divota di S. Leonardo da Porto-Maurizio." Firenze, Tipogr. Salesiana, 1903.

I. *Distrust of Self.*—I place as the corner-stone of all my Resolutions distrust of myself; for I know that all my relapses into sin and faults, both great and small, were the consequences of my pride, vanity, haughtiness of mind and heart, and confidence in my own strength; whilst, in all truth, I clearly know and confess by experience that I cannot emit a sigh, much less form a good thought, or the least salutary movement towards God, without new grace and fresh help from God Himself. Hence, with the sincerest truth, I acknowledge that I am ignorant, powerless, weak, useless and good for nothing; and this thought of my poverty and incapability I will put forward, before every action, at least before the principal ones, such as preaching, hearing confessions, counseling and the like; avowing and knowing very clearly from experience that all good comes from God, that God is the principal agent, and that to Him alone all honor and glory are due. These very Resolutions I look upon as drops of the mercy of God, and know well that, without His actual grace, they will amount to nothing—nay, that I will rather be acting contrary to them. Hence it is that, distrusting myself, I purpose to ask in every one of my actions, great or small, spiritual or temporal, the assistance of God, if not always externally, at least internally, by repeating several times: "My Jesus, mercy!"

II. *Confidence in God.*—After having conceived a distrust of myself, I will raise myself to trust in God, hoping for His Divine assistance, and, with a lively confidence, I will feel certain that my Omnipotent God intends to help me. Nay, I hold it as beyond a doubt that by frequently asking His help with these words: "My Jesus, mercy!" He will grant me this most efficacious assistance, that I may put into practice these holy Resolutions, which I intend making for His glory, for the fulfillment of His most holy will, in order to meet His Divine complaisance, and that I may obey His Divine inspirations, by which He constantly urges me on, and particularly in this Retreat, in which I resolve to efficaciously co-operate with His grace, as if this were His last call. I hope I will no longer be unfaithful, as I have been in the past; nay, trusting in His Divine assistance,

I will practice minutely everything; and if I happen, at any time, to fail, I will at once perform the penance, as I have said above. The principal actions of the day are three, which I will strive to perform with all exactness, diligence and attention, and these are: The Holy Mass, the Divine Office and the Mental Prayer.

III. *The Holy Mass.*—As to the Holy Mass, I will prepare for it with most exquisite care. To this end I will confess twice a day, taking the time to prepare myself for it; and if, at any time, either because of my many occupations or from lack of a convenient confessor, I shall not be able to confess at the feet of the priest, I will confess spiritually at the feet of Jesus, performing the same acts, and imposing on myself the penance, as if I had actually gone to confession. All this will I do in order to approach the altar with sovereign purity of heart, and also to augment grace, which I hope to increase more by a single confession than by many other good works of whatsoever kind. If I shall have sufficient time, I will recite the Psalms prescribed by the Church; if not, I will supply by interior acts, never omitting, though, to offer up the Blood of Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father thirty-three times, that this Most Precious Blood may serve to cleanse my poor soul. I will never celebrate the Mass without wearing the cilicium (iron girdle)—though it may be a day of great solemnity—in order that I may be ever reminded of the Passion of Jesus. I will endeavor to be most exact in performing all the ceremonies, rubrics, crosses and genuflections fully, without omitting even one of them; but going through them with the greatest interior modesty, preserving a true interior recollection, and being attentive to the meaning of the words. I will offer up that Divine Sacrifice for these four principal ends, viz., to praise the Divine Majesty, which is deserving of infinite praise; to satisfy the Justice of God for the many sins committed; to thank Him for the many benefits He has bestowed upon me; and to beseech Him as the Giver of all graces. I will make this offering at the time of the *Memento*, and, as the Mass continues, I will recall these ends, now one and then another, uniting myself to the Heart of Jesus. I will endeavor

to have the actual intention at the act of consecration, although I may have had it already in the morning and in the sacristy during the ordinary preparation. In the act of communicating myself, I will excite in my heart acts of lively faith and of a burning desire to be entirely transformed into Jesus, communicating every morning as if *per Viaticum*, just as if it were my last Communion on earth. After Mass I will make my thanksgiving, as usual, reciting the customary prayers, *Anima Christi*, *etc.*, *Obsecro*, *etc.*, with the intention that, from the Holy Mass to Compline, all I shall do will be done in thanksgiving for this great benefit, and with the intention, likewise, that all my works from the Compline to the Mass will be done in preparation for so tremendous a Sacrifice. I will also see to it that my greatest capital for preparation and thanksgiving shall consist of a pure and humble heart, enlightened by a lively faith, producing many acts of interior humility, of offering, of praise, of love and of contrition. And, as the Holy Mass is the richest treasure we may enjoy here on earth, I will assist at as many Masses as I can, when my occupations will permit me; and every morning, in the act of offering, I will form an intention and a desire to hear all the Masses which, on that day, will be celebrated throughout the entire world.

IV. *The Divine Office.*—As to the Divine Office, I will try to feel so that I will regard the Choir as a place of my delights. Hence, as soon as I shall reach it, I will prostrate myself to the ground, adoring the Most Holy Sacrament, and saying the anthem, *O Sacrum Convivium*, with the prayer that follows. Having reached my place, I will put myself at once in the presence of God; then, recollecting myself and revivifying my faith, I will see all the Most Holy Trinity in the centre of my soul, and, humbly adoring this Mystery, I will employ as a local reminder the fingers of my hand in the manner explained below. In moving my little finger, by which my soul is represented, I will make an act of diffidence of myself, looking upon myself as a barren trunk, unfit for anything without the assistance of grace. I will then in my thoughts sink myself into the very depth of hell, as if I were the worst of all the devils and unworthy to

stand in the Lord's presence, to say nothing of praising Him in company with the Religious. Then, moving the next finger, which stands to me for my Guardian Angel and my other Patron Saints, I will beg of them to praise, in my stead, and to thank and bless God in my behalf, I being unworthy to do it. In moving the middle finger, by which I will recall to my memory the Most Holy Mary, I will beg of her to praise, love, thank and bless my God for me. Then, moving the index, I shall intend to pray my good Jesus to praise most highly and to love and bless the Eternal Father for me. Finally, by moving the thumb, I shall elevate myself to form an act of confidence in God Triune and One, protesting that I wish to praise, love, thank and bless Him, in union with the praises, benedictions and thanksgivings that are offered to Him by the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and by all the Angels and Saints. And I will do all this in a short time, whilst the Religious assemble in the Choir. When reciting the Office outside of the Choir, I will perform these acts implicitly, moving the fingers in the manner above explained.

V. As soon as the Divine Office begins, I will endeavor to make this vocal prayer, instituted by the Church in praise of God, a mixed one for myself, that is (to say) both oral and mental; and, in order to maintain myself recollected and avoid distractions, I will distribute the various stages of the Passion throughout the Office, and meditate upon them as follows :

At the first Nocturn, I will meditate on the washing of the feet. At the second Nocturn, I will meditate on the Institution of the Blessed Sacrament. At the third, on the Prayer in the Garden. At the first Psalm of [the] Lauds, I will recall Jesus going to meet the soldiers, and, with His *Ego sum* (I am), throwing them all to the ground. At the second Psalm, I will recall Him when He was bound with cords. At the third, when He was dragged before the different tribunals, slapped on the cheeks, etc. At the fourth, when He was led before Pilate, where He kept that marvelous silence. At the fifth, when He was imprisoned; and then I will remain all alone with Him in the prison. At the *Te Deum* and the *Benedictus*, I will concentrate

my mind upon the Most Holy Trinity, and give vent to my feelings with acts of love and joy towards a God, One in Three Divine Persons, worthy of infinite praises. At the Prime, I will meditate on the scourging at the pillar; at Tierce, on the crowning with thorns; at Sext, on the carrying of the cross; at None, on Jesus Crucified; at Vespers, on Jesus dead on the cross, meditating, during the five Psalms, on the Five Wounds; at Compline, the taking down from the cross and the tearful burial. Then, every time the *Gloria Patri* is said, I will adore the Most Holy Trinity, and make an explicit act of faith, hope, love, thanksgiving and contrition with all its proper motives, knowing from experience that all this can very well be done during the time the acolytes are saying the antiphons. And whenever I shall say the Office outside the Choir, or when it is said in a low voice, lacking the necessary time for the above practices, then I will make these acts implicitly, saying: "I believe, I hope, I love, I repent, I thank," intending, by these words, to make these acts explicitly.

When reciting the Office outside the Choir, I will do it always on my knees, meditating on the points of the Passion above mentioned, in order thus to prevent the dissipation of the spirit, and to praise God with interior recollection. Failing in this, I will tell my fault in confession with a deep feeling of sorrow; and, although I shall not be able to meditate as in the Choir, I will, at least, give an interior glance at that Mystery.

VI. *Mental Prayer.*—As to the Mental Prayer, I will strive to make it familiar with myself, so that it may be my daily bread. Hence, I will never omit the three customary hours of our Institute, and, if unable to devote them in daytime on account of my occupations, I will do so in the night-time. And whenever I shall be kept busy by obedience, and shall find myself outside the Convent, or traveling, or attending to other affairs, I will keep strict silence and recollect myself interiorly; and, if alone with my companion, I will beg of him not to disturb me. This I purpose doing invariably, with the help of the Divine grace, well knowing that without this interior assistance I shall never keep any of these holy Resolutions.

During the Missions, I will never omit the usual meditation, reading beforehand the subject of meditation, and being on the alert when the time shall arrive for this practice in the Convents; for, at that time, I shall form that interior recollection, whether studying, or transacting business, or even preaching,—and elicit interior acts. Nay, whatever time shall be left to me outside the ordinary occupations, either in the Convent or in the Mission, I will employ it in prayer (though it may be but a few minutes at a time), conversing with God, and keeping myself recollected interiorly in His Divine Presence by forming divers interior acts in the manner told above; or else by a simple interior and loving look I will enjoy His most lovable conversation. To this end I will flee from the lay people; unless there shall be very important matters to speak to them about, and shall not care that they think me savage and uncivil, because I do not visit and mix with them. I will love my cell or a corner of the Choir, if I shall be in the Convent, and my room if on the Mission. The ordinary mode of my prayer shall be the reverse, seeking God within myself, beginning, ordinarily, with some part of the Passion of the Lord, particularly of Jesus Crucified; and after having thus disposed my heart by various acts of humility, contrition and love, I will enter intimately into the Heart of my Crucified Redeemer, the centre of my soul; and there I will contemplate the greatness of His Divine Attributes, now one and then another. After many such entrances and egresses, I will pause to meditate upon God in a general way, which will excite love for Him in the superior part of my soul. This will be the whole object of my prayer, viz., to keep my heart constantly occupied in loving; and I cannot find a better means to attain this holy end than this intimate recollection, silence and detachment from all creatures. I pray to God to take away my life rather than deprive me of this interior intercourse of my soul with Him, which is my little Paradise on earth. And whenever I shall fail, through my tepidity, or some slight attachment to creatures or things of the earth, which may put an obstacle in the way, I will quickly humble myself and confess my fault to my Spiritual Father, in order to obtain the remedy therefor.

VII. *Ejaculations.*—As to prayer of petition to obtain God's help in all my actions, I will make the familiar—nay, most familiar—ejaculation: "My Jesus, mercy;" having previously made a compact with God, that each time I shall say these holy words, I intend to ask His efficacious grace to love Him, to renew the pure intention of giving Him pleasure in everything, and to carry out His holy will. Hence, I will repeat these words, either mentally or vocally, thousands of times a day; and this will also be an excellent means of keeping my heart constantly occupied with God, which is the business above all other business; and, in order to facilitate this, I know that one must keep well in order the three powers—understanding, memory and will, by means of the three virtues—faith, hope and charity.

VIII. *Faith.*—When the eye of Faith is very clear, it makes a soul mistress of self, and guides it by a safe path to the blessed eternity. Hence, I will not be satisfied with a lively, but ordinary and, so to speak, speculative faith, but I will endeavor to have in everything an extraordinary faith, not only lively, but actual and practical, seeing God in all things and ordaining all things to God. And with this faith most lively and directing, which resides in the superior part of the soul, called the intelligence, I will measure all things; nay, I shall see to it that, stopping a while before all my actions, especially the principal ones, an act of faith shall precede, renewing the presence of God in me. By this means my soul will acquire great strength to work with fervor; and it is certain that the more lively the faith shall be in believing the supernatural truths, as if it actually saw them, the greater will the fervor of the soul be to act. I will, therefore, form, as it were, a mental recess within myself, which I will style "Region of Faith," where, having obliterated the memory of all creatures, I will speak to and converse with God, admiring His greatness, which I will seek nowhere but within myself in the centre of my soul, particularly in time of prayer, as I have said above.

Forgetting, then, all sensible things, and applying myself by the light of faith to woo my Most Beautiful God, I will enter-

tain myself with Him all alone, and will endeavor, as much as possible, to transform myself wholly in Him. Even outside of the time of prayer, I will accustom myself to perceive the goodness of God in His creatures, making naught of the exterior covering or appearance ; but valuing only what is inwardly in the creature, namely, God. And I hope that, having thus reformed the intellect by the virtue of faith (which I will endeavor to make as actual as possible), I will succeed better in the exercise of all other virtues. And in order to make it lively, I will often make acts of faith, holding as infallibly true all its mysteries, because they have been revealed by the Primary, Infallible Truth.

IX. *Hope.*—I will strive to excite very often in my heart the virtue of Hope, the object of which is the possession of God, our Sovereign Good, notwithstanding the countless number of my sins, all of which I will drown in the Most Precious Blood of Jesus ; and, resting my confidence upon these four firm foundations, viz., that God wishes to save me, because He is just, faithful, merciful and omnipotent, I will hold my salvation morally certain. Nay, I will do my best in order to transform this hope into confidence, which is but a most robust hope, and will endeavor to form so high an idea of the mercy of God, that, relying on the infinite merits of my Lord Jesus Christ (which I will often apply to myself and offer up to the Most High), and on the value of the Holy Indulgences, sacrifices and acts of contrition which I will most frequently excite in my heart, I will hope to be saved, without touching Purgatory, though I feel disposed to accept it willingly, nay, with thanksgiving till the day of judgment, if such be the will of God.

Nor can this extraordinary hope be harmful to me ; on the contrary, it will be useful, because, as it does not exclude a holy, filial love, it redounds to the honor of God and renders me more diligent in my actions. And for this holy end, I purpose to avoid not only mortal sins, but also venial ones, and even most trifling imperfections, using all diligence to acquire many Indulgences, hear many Masses and live with all exactness in everything that concerns my spiritual profit. In order to obtain this beautiful

grace, I will most frequently invoke the mercy of God, saying at every instant: "My Jesus, mercy!" More than this, I will make use of this little prayer as a most powerful means to obtain all the graces, knowing that God is most merciful, most faithful and most liberal in granting the graces which are asked of Him with full confidence, provided they are ordained to His greater glory and will not be prejudicial to our eternal salvation. Among the many other graces which I intend to ask Him each time I say these words: "My Jesus, mercy!" is that of final perseverance and also the efficacious grace of loving Him, and loving Him perfectly; for as soon as the true love of God is kindled in the soul, it becomes wholly reformed, purified and united with Him.

X. *Charity, or Love of God.*—Charity regards God as the Sovereign Good, nay, as an immense Ocean of every good, containing in Himself all imaginable perfections, Who should therefore be loved for His own sake; I declare I wish to have it fixed in my heart, as the chief object of my thoughts, my goals, my movements and actions. Nay, I declare that I will do nothing deliberately that may be opposed to the holy love of God; and though I do not make a vow to that effect, yet I mean to form a most firm resolution to try always to do what is most perfect, and never to commit a venial sin with full advertence. And whenever this unfortunately may happen, I will consider it the greatest misfortune that could befall me in this life, and will deeply lament it before God, and at once impose the penance on myself for it. In order that I may succeed in keeping myself thus unsullied and pure from even the least faults, I will hold myself constantly in the presence of God, deny my own will and passions even in the least things, and appreciate, as treasures, contempt, mortification, opposition, sorrow, poverty, with all the inconveniences a poor, religious and penitent life brings with it, embracing them all very willingly, both large and small. Nay, I will endeavor to tend more and more to the practice of austerities, rigors and penances, and to everything which is contrary to our corrupt nature, abhorring all delicacies. And though, in this, I am sure to commit many faults, and often I shall be

caught theft in hand, let all Heaven know, at least, that this is my desire, to love my God most perfectly, and what is more, to live in the constant exercise of love towards Him. I will frequently excite in my heart acts of love of complacency (taking delight in God's infinite perfections) ; and acts of love of benevolence (wishing that all men should love and bless Him), and acts of love of preference (esteeming Him more than all creation together, nay, esteeming as nothing all things outside of God) ; and acts of most bitter contrition for having so much offended Him.

Above all, everything that I shall do and think I intend to do deliberately to this sole end—of loving God and giving Him pleasure ; and I will be on my guard so as not to do anything, as far as I am able, without actual, or, at least, virtual desire of consuming myself with God's love. Hence it is that I will spend all the time I shall spare from my ordinary occupations, in prayer and in being united with God, in order to augment His grace more and more, intertwining always acts of faith, hope and charity with my actions. This will be my interior, familiar and almost constant occupation ; and, in order that lukewarmness may not prevent me from enjoying so great a boon, I will make, with all possible fervor, an interior conversion to God, as though I were just at that time beginning my spiritual life, declaring, in this act, that I wish to love Him most fervently, earnestly and constantly. This I will do many times in the day, and almost hourly, but at least seven times without fail, that is, in the morning, after the usual exercise of directing all my actions to God—after the three customary hours of prayer—and every evening, before retiring. I will turn my back to all creatures, looking wholly to God, and resolve to keep my heart unencumbered of all creatures and to remain in this mental solitude, built up by faith, where, from the apex of my intelligence, I will look up to God alone, in order to love Him with all the fervor of my will, without having any other end in view than that of pleasing Him in all things. I declare that all these Resolutions I make have no other aim but this loving union with God, night and day, and in all my duties and occupations. And I pray to the Most Holy Mary to obtain for me this grace, and to grant her

blessing to this my will, so that it may never change for eternity. Amen.

In order to keep myself ever busy in loving the sovereign goodness of God, with the blessing of my Spiritual Father, I will set down whatever I shall have to do each day, week, month, year and at all times. Every day, then, as soon as I awake, I will raise my mind to God and invoke His Divine Mercy, saying several times: "My Jesus, mercy!" in order to ask God's aid for all the actions of the day. This done, I will turn my heart to God, aspiring to Him, and declaring that, on that day, I wish to love Him with all possible fervor, as if it were the last day of my life, and resolve to seek His pleasure in all things. Prostrated to the ground, I will make the acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition and offering; putting on my cilicium, and taking the holy water, I will set out for the Choir, reciting Psalms, saying "*Deus, Deus meus*"—"God, my God." I will do the same, as soon as I awake in the night, to go to the Choir for Matins, saying, while passing through the dormitory, the Psalm *Miserere*. When I have arrived at the Choir, I will carry out exactly all the devotions which I have already resolved upon for the Divine Office.

XI. *Morning Offering.*—Every morning, having put on my cilicium, as I have already resolved to do, I will keep it on for two or three hours, till I shall have celebrated the Holy Mass, and I will never celebrate the Mass without it, no matter what solemnity it may happen to be.

Every morning, after the act of Offering, I will form the intention of gaining all the Indulgences I can, though I may be ignorant of whether the works I will perform may answer for those prescribed. As to the Indulgences that are applicable to the souls in Purgatory, my intention will be to apply one to the holiest soul, and the others to those towards whom I am bound by greater obligation of justice or of charity, such as the souls of my relatives and benefactors, or else those who have been more deeply enamored of God or of the Most Holy Mary, and, consequently, more solicitous about their eternal salvation. I will also apply the satisfaction of all the good works I shall per-

form, within the next twenty-four hours, to the holiest soul; and, should there be any surplus left, I will apply it to the souls mentioned above. So that, without making any other distinction, I will say every morning: "I intend to apply all the Indulgences I am about to gain on this day, and all the satisfaction of my good works, for the souls in Purgatory in the usual form. But, as to the Indulgence of six *Our Fathers*, *Hail Marys* and *Glorias*, I will gain it three times a day."

Every morning, after having gone through the above acts, I will form the intention to consecrate in celebrating Mass, to absolve in hearing confessions, and to receive and administer with proper intention and disposition the Holy Sacraments; and I will renew the intention of assisting, if it be possible, at all the Masses, which, on that day, will be celebrated throughout the whole world, offering them all to God, as if I had actually heard all of them, and offering them up for the end above indicated, as expressed in the act of Offering, which has been published, beginning with the words "O my Eternal God," which I shall recite every morning, as follows:

"O Eternal God, behold me prostrate before the throne of Thy Majesty, humbly adoring Thee. I offer to Thee all my thoughts, all my words and all my actions of this day; and I form the intention of doing all for Thy love and Thy glory, and that I may accomplish Thy Divine Will, to serve Thee, to praise Thee and to bless Thee; to be enlightened in the Mysteries of Faith, to secure my salvation and hope in Thy mercy; to satisfy Thy Divine Justice for the many grievous sins I have committed, to aid the souls in Purgatory, to obtain the grace of a sincere conversion for all the sinners. In a word, I wish to perform all my actions this day in union with the pure intentions that Jesus and Mary had, together with those of the Saints, who are now in Heaven, and those of the Just on earth. I wish to have an opportunity to seal this intention with my own blood, and would wish to renew it at every instant of my life and throughout all eternity. O my God, accept of my good-will; give me Thy holy blessing, with the efficacious grace, that I may never fall into mortal sin, but especially this day, during which I wish to gain all the Indulgences I possibly can, and assist at all the

Masses that will be celebrated to-day throughout the world, applying them to the relief of the souls in Purgatory, that they may be delivered from their sufferings."

XII. *Devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Guardian Angel.*—Every day I will recite the Rosary composed of seven decades; and when my other occupations will not permit me to do this, I will make seven acts of complacency in the seven joys felt by the Most Holy Mary in her heart. I will also make every day twelve profound inclinations in honor of the twelve prerogatives accorded to the Most Holy Mary by the Most Holy Trinity, venerating her as my great Lady, and congratulating her for having been created pure and immaculate, and for having been chosen the Mother of God. At each inclination, I will ask her for angelical purity of body and heart, a most profound humility and the conversion of all sinners, declaring that I love her with my whole heart and will love her till my last breath as my great Lady.

Every time the clock strikes, I will recite one *Hail Mary*, congratulating the Most Holy Mary upon her having been created without the stain of original sin, and for having been chosen to be the great Mother of God. I will also thank the Most Holy Trinity for having granted her such beautiful prerogatives. I will salute my Guardian Angel, thanking him for having assisted me during the past hour, and will humbly ask him to assist me in the hour following, that I may be faithful to God in everything. To make up for the hours of the night when I may not hear the striking of the clock, I will say the *Hail Mary* at some other time.

Three times a day, at the ordinary ringing of the bell for the *Ave Maria*, I will recite the usual prayers on my knees and the *Angelus Domini*, but with this addition, that, after the first *Hail Mary*, I will renew the vow of poverty into the hands of the Infant Jesus; after the second, I will renew the vow of obedience into the hands of the Most Holy Mary; and after the third, I will renew my vow of chastity into the hands of St. Joseph, and will bow profoundly at the *Et Verbum caro factum est*, because the Word so humbled Himself for us. Every day,

when in the Convent, and not prevented by any important business which might deprive me of the necessary time, I will perform the Way of the Cross.

XIII. *Mortification.* — Every day, during the morning prayer, I will renew the purpose of mortifying my own will, judgment and passions on all occasions, even in the most trifling things, always opposing my self-love, wielding constantly the knife of mortification, that I may cut off all ties, and keep from looking at curious or dangerous objects, from uttering idle, vain and unnecessary words, from seeking to find out things that concern me not, and especially to mortify myself in eating ;—all this with the motive of giving pleasure to God. Hence, through an intention of mortification, whenever I shall be in our Convents of the Retreat, I will not eat meat, eggs, fish or any other dish, no matter what solemnity may occur. Of course, I will accept these things when brought to me, but will leave them tactfully on the table, and will be satisfied with the soup and bread alone, and, at most, with a little cheese and fruit. I will never take salt, oranges, lemons, sauces, nor similar relishes to excite the appetite and please the taste. Neither will I taste pastries, candied fruits or other dainties ; but will simply partake of the soup, such as shall be placed before me, and, often, by putting water into it, I will deprive it of its taste. I will renounce, for the love of God, every pleasure at meals, and will never speak about them for any reason whatsoever, banishing the thoughts of such things, as one banishes those against purity. When obedience prevents me from practicing this mortification, I will bow down my head and try to eat unconsciously, and make up for the lack of mortification with some interior exercise, such as making acts of love, contrition and the like in greater number.

As our Lord Benedict XIV has ordered that the food, which at first consisted of two soups and a salad, shall be modified and another dish added, for obedience sake, I will take it like the rest ; but will endeavor to mortify my self-love as much as possible ; and will not permit more than one dish of fish or salted meat to be given me ; and if other things shall be served over and above this, they shall be given to the poor.

When I shall pass through the Convents, on my journeys, I will take what they give me, and will partake sparingly of it, meat excepted, with good grace, or I will let it remain; and whenever obedience or regard for my companion will not permit me to do so, I will supply with interior acts, as above. In like manner will I act in the houses of lay people, so as not to offend them; and shall do the same in voyaging by river or by sea, or when tarrying in hospices with my brethren, taking a little of everything, in order not to displease them.

In the evening, whilst in our Convents of Retreat, I will partake but of one dish, viz., the one that is first placed before me, such as salad or soup; but I will not accept of the others, or, if I do accept them, I will not eat them. Whilst giving Missions, I will take only a little soaked bread and fruits in the morning when it is not a fast-day; and on Sundays and Feasts, I will add to these some little anchovies and nothing else.

On Saturday evenings, if in one of our Convents, I will fast with the strictest rigor, as though it were Friday, omitting the usual salad; and when giving a Mission, in the morning, I will not take the soaked bread, but will be satisfied with dry bread and fruit alone, as on Fridays. On all the vigils of the Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, when we eat on the floor, as is done on all Fridays in March in our Convents, I will only take bread and water, at least in the morning. I will offer up to God the premices of the fruits that shall appear on the table without even tasting them; and of the others I will always refuse those which are more agreeable to my taste. I will be sparing in regard to drinking wine, taking care that what is given to me is reduced by adding half as much or even more water. I will never drink except at mealtime, no matter how thirsty I may feel nor how apparent the need; neither will I eat the least thing outside of the common meal, whether in or out of the Convent.

Both before and after dinner and supper I will bless the food and give thanks slowly, not hurrying this necessary acknowledgment of the benefit of God, even though no one else should be in the refectory. When on the Missions, I will see to it that the blessing and thanksgiving are conducted in the manner used

in the refectory ; and if unable to assist at the grace, because obliged to retire to rest before the others that I may arise earlier, I will say grace alone, reciting the same prayers as if I were present with the community.

Every day, no matter what solemnity it may be, I will give unto myself the discipline ; which, during the Missions, will be done as soon as awakened, and, when in the Convents, either in the evening, after the examination of conscience, or in the night, after matins, even on the days when it is not done by the community. When traveling, I will do it in the Convents and the houses of lay people, provided the opportunity of doing so unobserved is afforded to me. As long as I live I will go barefooted, even on my long journeys, both in summer and winter, to imitate our Father St. Francis, his companions, and Christ our Lord, during the time of His preaching, and to obtain from God the alms of the conversion of some few more souls. I will always sleep on the bare boards, or, at the most, I will put one covering on them ; I will use a piece of wood for my pillow, or will cover it with a cloth that can be arranged every evening and removed in the morning. During the day and even during the night I will wear on my breast a cross with seven sharp points, that I may not only suffer from their pricking, but have a constant reminder near my heart of the sorrowful heart of the great Virgin Mary. If obedience prevents it, I will replace it by interior acts.

XIV. *Examination of Conscience and the Litany before Retiring.*—Twice a day I will examine my conscience ; that is, at noon and in the evening. In the midday examination I will make a brief review of my heart, in order to find out whether it preserves the interior peace, founded on the basis of holy humility and fervent love of God, examining myself for a short time to see whether this peace has been in any way disturbed, that I may re-establish it by means of acts of contrition and loving petitions to God, repeating many times : "My Jesus, mercy !" In order to preserve this interior peace and spirit of fervent love, four things I know to be necessary to me, and these I purpose to practice : First, To be dead to the world, to all

creatures, to myself and to all that is not God, keeping my heart unencumbered of all created things, so that I may esteem everything that is not God, or that does not belong to Him, to be less than a grain of sand. Second, To live wholly dependent upon Divine Providence, attributing to Him whatever will happen throughout the day, whether important or trifling, favorable or contrary; holding it certain that it is best and most suitable to the glory of God and my eternal salvation. Third, To love suffering, both interior and exterior, counting dear all humiliations, all contempt and all desertions by creatures. The Paradise of heaven consists in the enjoyment; the Paradise of earth consists in the sufferings. And when I shall feel annoyance at being scorned, or sick, or suffering, I will at once cast a glance at Jesus, whose familiar companions were sovereign sorrow, sovereign contempt and sovereign poverty. Fourth, Not to undertake many things, though they be good, but only those which are called for by my ministry, according to the order of obedience; and, above all, not to act with excitement and impetuosity, but with calmness and modesty, making use of this holy modesty in my words, my gestures and all my movements. Hence, every day, I will make a review of my heart, at noon, to see whether the peace has been disturbed and whether this holy fervor has cooled, because, perchance, I failed in some of these four points. And, on finding that I have done so, will make an act of contrition and purpose to amend myself.

The examination in the evening will be a little longer. Placing myself in the presence of God, I will ask for His light to know all the faults I have committed throughout that day, and then briefly recall to my mind the principal actions, places, persons and affairs undertaken, in order to find out how I have conducted myself in words, in thoughts, in hearing confessions, in celebrating Mass, in conversing, and in reciting the Divine Office. I will also examine myself as to whether I have exceeded in taking food and the necessary rest, as to how my time has been employed, and whether all my senses have been properly kept in custody; whether there have been any over-anxieties, any immodest looks, any idle, vain, useless or uncharitable words, or lack of prudence in conversation; or boasting, or excusing

my own faults; or resentment, rash judgments, suspicions, or little exaggerations, or negligences in banishing bad thoughts and inclinations. After having discovered many faults, I will reflect that there are many more which I know not, because even my good actions will have been tainted with self-love, for I have sought myself more than God, and have not had that pure and single intention which I should have had, or because I have destroyed their worth by the coolness of my affections. Therefore, I shall have great reason to be confounded, and will ask God's pardon for all by acts of contrition and shall make a firm purpose of amendment. I will spend more time in these acts than in the examination, but will be careful, though, to place myself at once, in the beginning, in the presence of God; otherwise, if some distracting thought arises, the time passes away and nothing good is done.

In the evening, before retiring to rest, I will recommend myself to all my Patron Saints, and will compose a Litany of them, saying:

Kyrie eleison, Christe eleison.

Holy Mary, pray for me.
St. Joseph, pray for me.
St. John the Baptist, pray for me.
St. Peter, pray for me.
St. Paul, pray for me.
St. John the Evangelist, pray for me.
St. Joachim, pray for me.
St. Anne, pray for me.
St. Francis, pray for me.
St. Anthony, pray for me.
St. Bernardine, pray for me.
St. Vincent Ferreri, pray for me.
St. Peter of Alcantara, pray for me.
St. Paschal, pray for me.
St. Francis of Sales, pray for me.
St. Louis, pray for me.
St. Ignatius, pray for me.
St. Francis Xavier, pray for me.
St. Aloysius Gonzaga, pray for me.
St. Francis de Paula, pray for me.
St. Philip Neri, pray for me.
St. John of the Cross, pray for me.
St. Vincent de Paul, pray for me.
St. Teresa, pray for me.
St. Mary Magdalen the Penitent, pray for me.
St. Catharine Martyr, pray for me.
St. Catherine of Siena, pray for me.
St. Mary Magdalen De-Pazzi, pray for me.
St. Leonard, pray for me.
St. Louis Martyr, pray for me.
Blessed Salvador, pray for me.

Then the prayer: *Let us pray: Protect, O Lord, etc.* Afterwards, I will make all the acts of faith, hope, charity and contrition, with a resolution that I will live and die for the Roman Catholic faith, and give up my soul by a most intense act of God's love. After this I will go through the exercise of St. Vincent Ferreri for a happy death, and will recommend my soul, as if that night were to be my last, saying three times: "*In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum*"—"Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my soul." Then I will recite the *De Profundis*, and pray to the Lord to count it to my benefit when I shall really be dead. In order that I may be fortified with the last Holy Sacraments of Confession and Communion, I will recommend myself to St. Barbara, saying one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary;* and then I will ask the assistance of my Guardian Angel, that he may protect me during all the time I shall be resting; hence, I will say the *Angele Dei.* I will then sprinkle the cell with holy water, and will form the intention that all my breathings, while asleep, shall be so many acts of love of God. I will then lay myself down on the boards with modesty, taking into my hands the Cross of the Rosary or the Crucifix that I wear on my breast, saying many times: "My Jesus, mercy! and will endeavor to sleep, having previously recited the above prayer to St. Vincent for a happy death.

XV. *Employment of Time.*—In order to accomplish the duties I shall have to do each day, I will be careful to avoid, not only exterior idleness, abhorring the loss of time in tarrying to talk of unimportant and worldly things with the friars or the seculars (unless it may be once in a long while for some inevitable reason); but I will flee, even more, the interior idleness of the mind. Therefore, I will walk through the Convent, or the streets, with modesty, often repeating the ejaculation: "My Jesus, mercy!" I will kiss the Crosses wherever I find them,(1) saying: "*O Crux, ave, spes unica!*"—"O Cross, hail! our only hope!" I will take the holy water, whenever I shall be

(1) In Italy Crosses are erected on many mountains, hills and road intersections.—*Note of the Translator.*

able ; and, to this end, I will endeavor to have it in my cell, or in my room when I shall be on the Missions, and each time I will make an act of contrition, saying : "*Quia peccavi Tibi et non amavi Te super omnia, Deus meus. Bonitas Infinita, amo Te super omnia et ideo doleo super omnia ; nolo amplius peccare : miserere mei*"—"For I have sinned against Thee and did not love Thee above all, O my God. Infinite Goodness, I love Thee above all things ; hence, I grieve above everything else ; I will sin no longer ; have mercy on me." In contemplating Jesus during His Passion, or looking at some instrument thereof, I will say : "*Passio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi sit semper in corde meo*"—"May the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ be always in my heart." When looking at the pictures of the Blessed Virgin, I will recite one *Hail Mary*, and, with a profound bow, I will say interiorly : "You are my Beloved !" If I meet anybody, I will salute him by saying : "*Sia lodato Gesù Cristo*"—"Jesus Christ be praised ;" and I will recommend this mode of salutation during every Mission, in order that Our Lord Jesus Christ may be everywhere blessed and praised. In this way I shall be always occupied in praising the good Jesus and in making others praise Him also.

XVI. *Purity of Intention.*—The seal of all these actions of mine, which I intend to perform every day, will be the intention, not only right, but pure and simple, with which I perform them, in order that they may be very meritorious and pleasing to His Divine Majesty. I acknowledge that here I shall need to employ all possible diligence ; because one action performed with a pure and simple intention is worth more before God than a hundred others done without it. It is this purity of intention that ravishes (as it were) the Heart of God and gives Him the highest praise ; this it is that sanctifies the soul and makes it perfect, that makes all the other virtues precious and raises them to the highest degree of merit ; because this is the cream of the love of God. Hence it is that, with God's grace, I will put into action all the powers of my soul, in order to succeed in performing all the above works, with the pure and simple intention of seeking in everything the pleasure of God alone, without any

mixture of secondary ends. Acting with this holy intention, I must needs forget all creatures, all my comforts, my own interest and all human respect, uniting all of these in the one thought of seeking only the pleasure of God, doing everything in God, with God and for God; for it is nobler, more meritorious and acceptable to God, to practice the virtues in God and for God, than to do so for the love of God. In fact, one who practices the virtues for the love of God may mix some secondary end therein; but he who practices them in God and for God only, that is, regarding God only in everything, excludes every other motive, and thus forms for himself that pure intention which ravishes the Heart of God. This intention, therefore, I purpose to have in all the above-described exercises; and, in order to have it, before beginning any action, I will awaken the faith in my highest intelligence, and will contemplate God Triune and One in my inmost heart and soul, addressing to Him alone that particular deed, seeking only His pleasure and Divine complacency, saying, interiorly: "All for Thee, my God!" Thus I hope to succeed, if I shall possess the interior peace of heart mentioned above. Hence, at the noontime examination, I will reflect and see whether in all my actions I have given that inward glance to God and sought only His pleasure in everything; and upon finding any fault as to this, I will repent of it, impose a penance on myself and resolve to amend. Nay, more, this being of all things the most important, because it is the very soul of the spiritual life, I beg of God and the Most Holy Mary to assist me, that I may practice it perfectly; for I wish to have it actual in all my deeds. But this being difficult, I wish it to be virtual, or, at least, conventional, saying, at the beginning of every action: "My Jesus, mercy!" And by these words, I intend, once for all, to renew that holiest intention, pure and simple, which, having God alone in view, seeks only His pleasure and complacency in everything.

XVII. *Weekly Virtue—Resolution and Retreat.*—Every week I will choose a virtue to practice, which will be the subject of my examen at noontime. As a rule it will be the peace of the heart, grounded on humility, with a pure and simple intention in

every one of the things mentioned above, making use of every industry in order to accustom myself to this holy exercise, keeping my heart always in peace and my intention always centred in God. When the clock strikes, I will recite the *Hail Mary* in the manner above mentioned, and will cast a glance at my heart to see whether the *interior clock* runs rightly and to find out whether any disturbing thing has stopped it, so that I may remove it and regain peace.

Every month will I read these Resolutions of mine, in order to see whether I am faithful to God; and this I will do on the first day of the month; and whenever, on such a day, I shall be busy and hindered by many occupations (as generally happens when I am away from the Convent on a Mission), I will then choose the day of that month which is least occupied, and will also make a one-day Retreat to prepare myself for death in the manner indicated in the Sacred Manual printed for the nuns. But if during the Missions I shall be unable to read over these Resolutions, or to make the above-mentioned one-day Retreat, I will, at least, read the most important of them, taking a day between one Mission and the other, and will make the Retreat as well as I can; or else I will wait until after the closing of the Mission; for this accounting is most necessary in order to be prepared for the call, when it shall come from God.

Once or twice every year, whenever it will be possible, I will withdraw to some of the most solitary Convents, in order to make my Holy Exercises and a Retreat as long as possible, pleading with the Superiors to obtain this favor. While there I will renew all the maxims, sentiments and holy resolutions herein described, in order to advance more and more in perfection, and augment more and more the grace and charity towards God, cutting off all the evil offshoots of the vices, faults and passions. I know by experience that this Retreat is more necessary to me than life itself, because, without it, my life would be useless, and would go from bad to worse, and my preaching would be weak and of little fruit. And for this object, I will use every diligence to obtain from my Superiors the favor of retiring to some solitary Convent, and there give myself wholly to God, by renewing all these Resolutions. Lent will be the best time for it.

XVIII. *The Vow of Poverty.*—I will strive at all times to observe the holy vows with the greatest exactness, particularly the vow of poverty, which is the *device* of our Order. I will endeavor to imitate, as nearly as I can, my holy Father St. Francis, and his first companions, following their maxims, and loving the inconveniences that poverty brings with it. In this I shall be encouraged by the greatness of the reward, for St. Peter and St. Paul revealed, one day, to our holy Father, that all those friars who shall observe perfect poverty till death will be assured of their eternal salvation and numbered among the blessed ones. And I will not only be moved by the reward, but also by the pleasure that is given to the Heart of Jesus, Who wished to be born poor and to die most poor, and naked, upon the Cross. That I may practice this poverty with the greatest perfection, I will endeavor to embrace four kinds of poverty: The first concerns earthly things and deprives us of all dominion, even over the superfluous use of them, and thus reduces us to the mere necessaries, and to these even in a scanty measure. The second kind of poverty concerns the body, detaching us from all the comforts and inordinate attachments of our flesh, as, for instance, the use of victuals, clothes, cells and other similar things, which may be either superfluous or luxurious. The third regards the soul, detaching it from all useless and idle thoughts, from inordinate affections, and from one's own judgment, will and other like tendencies contrary to right reason. The fourth regards the heart, detaching it from the very pleasures, spiritual consolations and the like interior affections, such, for instance, as to become a great Saint, and to arrive at a sublime degree of grace and glory, forbidding that the very enjoying of God and the acquiring of the glory be pursued with too much attachment, but being contented with that degree, both of grace and of glory, which the Most High has decreed to grant me from eternity. These last two kinds of poverty are the most precious ones; and, as I am very far from possessing them, I will pray to our Father St. Francis to obtain them for me from God, and will endeavor to imitate him, as closely as I possibly can, in his external poverty, which concerns the simple use of things; and therefore I purpose to observe the rules that follow.

First, I will only wear a habit patched inside and outside, as our Father St. Francis directs in his will; and will use the pieces of coarse wool and thick cloth to absorb the perspiration during the sermon. When this is over, I will take them off, but, if obedience compels me to wear them at other times, I will obey. Second, I will never take a new habit or mantle, but only one that has been worn by others, patching it up, as above. Third, I will keep nothing for my own use, except the Crucifix I wear on my breast, the *sporta*,(1) a carton-box for my sermons and writings, the Breviary, the little Rule, the cilicium, the little Cross with sharp points, the spectacles, the Rosary, two disciplines (one to be used in public and the other at night in secret); a small paper image of the Immaculate Conception and one of St. Vincent Ferreri, fixed in a frame, with which to bless the sick; and no other thing, except these, will I keep for my use. Fourth, I will never give anything, even the least, to religious or seculars, either personally or through others; leaving it to my companions in the Mission, if they choose to give some articles of devotion, to do as they see fit, without concerning myself about it. To this same end, I will not accept for my person even the least thing; and I will be most strict about this, without ever relaxing, no matter how strongly I may be persuaded to do so; thus preserving a profound peace for my soul. Fifth, I will love and prefer the poorest in all things relating to the habit, the food, the cell and the like, wishing that even what is necessary may be denied me; and whenever the opportunity presents itself, I will make acts of complacency thereat, although the inferior part of my nature may feel a resentment in consequence of it. Sixth, I will partake scantily of everything—food, light, fire, water in washing, paper in writing and the like—taking care, during the Missions, not to run into excessive expenses, and always making much of small things. For the love of holy poverty, I will sleep on the bare boards, go about in a patched-up habit, barefooted, and mix willingly with the poor, hearing their confessions with more pleasure than those of the rich. I will

(1) A peculiar kind of basket, made of solidly-woven palm leaves, upright, with tight cover and a handle, to be carried on the arm.

abhor all objects of curiosity, and all things vain and superfluous, inclining always to the rigor of the poverty in everything, in order to imitate, as much as I can, our Seraphic Father; and I wish that the whole Order would return to that primitive rigor which he and his blessed companions practiced. Though in practice I may fail often in exercising this holy virtue, I declare that I wish to amend myself, and let my holy Father know that my desire is to be poor, to live poor—most poor till death.

XIX. *Chastity.*—With regard to Chastity it is necessary to watch all the first movements, and look at the enemy from afar and not allow him to approach, but declare war against him as soon as he appears. For this purpose it is necessary, first of all, to reform our understanding, by deeming everything connected with the opposite vice as the most horrible stench. Hence, I propose to myself to be cautious in regard to this matter more than in any other, and to fly from all dangers. I will avoid dealing with women, except when required by obedience, or extreme necessity, or to help them to save their souls. The latter I will do with the greatest caution, never looking at them fixedly in the face; and when dealing with persons of consideration, I will acquit myself in an off-handed manner, revolving some good thought in my mind, just as one who, when dealing with infected persons or those who might infect one, keeps in his hand some good perfume. Turning my eyes elsewhere, I will finish with politeness, so as not to cause surprise. To this end, I will never visit pious women, except when they are very ill. During the Missions no woman shall be permitted to enter our rooms, nor will we converse with any woman outside the confessional; but, when this is inevitable, it must be done in a public and open place. In a word, I will constantly ask of God angelical purity, desiring never to feel any movement contrary to this holy virtue; and I will accuse myself in confession even of what is not actually a sin, such as the first movements and small beginnings of evil inclinations, using great rigor in everything; for it is certain that no severity will ever be too great. In order to obtain this angelical purity, I will make, every day, the twelve bows mentioned above.

XX. *Obedience.*—As to the holy Obedience, which is the principal and noblest of all the vows, and by which one is placed in the state of the true Religious, I purpose observing it very exactly, with God's grace; for, without it, all efforts to obtain perfection would be vain. There are three kinds of obedience: The first is the conformity of the work to the command, that is, the doing of such a thing because it is commanded. The second is the conformity of our will to that of the Superior, that is, the doing of the thing because the Superior so orders. The third is the conformity of our will to the most holy will of God, acknowledged and adored in the will of the Superior; and because this is the true and most perfect obedience, I purpose to observe the holy obedience in this manner, viz., regarding in every act of obedience the formal reason thereof, which is the most holy will of God, holding for certain that he who orders and commands is not man, but God: "*Qui vos audit, me audit*"—"He who hears you, hears Me" (Luke x, 16). And, with God's grace, I purpose to do this not only virtually, by means of a previous intention; but actually, by obeying every time with the actual consideration that the Superior who orders and commands is a God on earth. Hence, I will bring myself to obey for this sole end, because God so wills, God so ordains, God so commands; and in this manner it will be easy for me not only to obey with the will, but also with the judgment; because if it is God who ordains and commands, beyond a doubt, what He ordains and commands will always be the best, though, to my judgment, the contrary may appear to be the case. (This must be understood, however, only when the Superior does not command anything sinful, or what is contrary to our Rules, or opposed to the commands of higher Superiors, and similar cases, according to the teachings of learned and zealous Spiritual Fathers.) Nay, outside of these cases, I intend to obey my companions during the Missions, unless it be in something contrary to our Rules and the advancement of God's glory. During our journeys, I will adapt myself to the opinion of the companion who may be assigned to me, in everything that will not be an offense against God; as has been said above. Nay, in ordinary matters, I will also obey the lay brother and others

who may command me, looking upon them as my Superiors. Whenever I hear holy obedience mentioned, I will bow down my head, being certain that, having obedience for my guide in everything, I will enjoy true peace and will do everything with the greatest calm. Hence, whether I go to the Missions, or remain in the Convent, or be employed in one thing or another, will be a matter of indifference to me ; for one thing will be as dear to me as another, provided I am sure that God so wills. Therefore, I will respect my Superior, as though he were a God on earth, showing to him every consideration, bowing not only to him, but even before his room every time I shall pass it, as to a place wherein the lieutenant of God dwells ; and I will not do the least thing save by obedience. For this purpose I have laid down in these pages the minutest things, in order to practice the obedience with all, both the Spiritual Father and the Superior. If they shall tell me to tear all these pages away, I will quickly obey and will throw them into the fire. And when they shall order me to do just the opposite to what I have proposed, I will obey punctually ; nay, I will do neither more nor less than what I shall be ordered to do, and protest that, in this holy obedience, I wish to live, with the same I wish to die ; and at the mere name of obedience I will bow my head.

XXI. *Virtue of Religion—The Cross—The Passion—The Blessed Sacrament—The Blessed Virgin—The Guardian Angel—Purgatory.*—I will endeavor at all times to observe in a special manner three other virtues, which, after the theological ones, are the most conspicuous, the most excellent, and, in practice, the easiest, and which, particularly to me, are the most necessary. These virtues are Religion, Humility and Charity towards my neighbor. With regard to the virtue of Religion, which consists in a recognition of the Divine Excellence, and in a true and humble submission to the Infinite Majesty of God, I will strive to familiarize myself with it first by interior acts, humbling myself before God, and acknowledging Him for my Lord and the Sovereign of my soul, lowering myself to the very dust before so great a Majesty. I will repeat these acts frequently in time of prayer, and now—for all time to come—I make the intention to

repeat these acts every time I shall kiss the ground, kneel down before the Blessed Sacrament, bow to the images of Jesus, of Mary and of the Saints, take the holy water, say the *Confitcor* and other prayers, and remain prostrate before God. But particularly every time I shall say: "My Jesus, mercy!" I intend to acknowledge His mercy as an immense sea of all blessings. And because of saying it so often, I shall not be able each time to form an actual intention, now, for all future time, I make a compact in this matter with my God, declaring that, every time I shall say these words, I intend to render Him the worship which is due to Him; and I would wish to acknowledge, every moment, the excellence of so august a Majesty, through my understanding, my tongue, and all my interior and exterior powers.

Hence, I will exercise this virtue of Religion by the devotion I shall manifest to the Holy Cross and to the Passion of Our Lord, to the Most Holy Sacrament, to the great Virgin, to my Guardian Angel and the Saints, to their relics and images, as well as to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. As to the Holy Cross, I will often embrace it, have it in my hands when journeying or sleeping, and kiss it wherever I shall find it, saying: "*O Crux, ave, spes unica!*"—"Hail, O Cross, our only hope!"—acknowledging it as the source of our every good.

I will meditate night and day, particularly during the recitation of the Divine Office, as I have resolved above, on the Passion of Our Lord, and the following ejaculation will always be on my lips: "*Passio Domini mei Jesu Christi sit semper in corde meo*"—"May the Passion of my Lord Jesus Christ be always in my heart." I will promote everywhere and always the practice of having the bell rung every afternoon at twenty-one o'clock, in order to give a signal that all the faithful may, at that hour, go on their knees and recite three *Paters* and *Aves*, in honor of the three hours' agony which Jesus suffered for us on the Cross; and that they may remember that just then the Son of God expired, praying for the conversion of the most obstinate sinners. To the end that the memory of our good Jesus may be well stamped upon the hearts of men, I will introduce everywhere the Way of the Cross; and will spare no pains

to smooth over all difficulties, in order that this holy exercise may be frequently practiced. I will often give It as a penance to those who may come to confession, and will exhort other confessors to do the same, so that the Passion of Our Redeemer, being once introduced into the hearts of men, may also cause right living and the disposition to practice every virtue to take root therein.

The devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament will be the centre of my affections. I will adore It everywhere; and upon reaching any town, my first visit will be to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, reciting the antiphon, "*O Sacrum Convivium*," with the prayer, rendering It homage by interior and exterior acts of adoration. In the Missions I will do my best to have It accompanied by everybody with a great many lights whenever It is being carried to the sick; and I will establish everywhere the Congregation of the Perpetual Adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament, endeavoring to arrange that everyone take his hour, so that there may always be someone to honor and adore Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament, at least in those places where the printed bulletins may be had. Nay, in honor of this Most August Sacrament, I will direct my whole life to celebrate with recollection the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, wherein an infinite honor is given to God. To this end I will endeavor punctually to carry out all that I have resolved in the third paragraph of these Resolutions, never omitting anything.

I wish to have the most tender devotion to the Most Holy Virgin, and declare that I have placed the all-important affair of my eternal salvation in her holy hands, and that I love her with tender love and filial affection as the dearest of mothers, wishing that all should love her and show the greatest respect to her. Hence, I will preach her panegyric with the greatest fervor of my heart, hoping that all may be enkindled with the love of so august a Lady; and, above all, I will cherish a very particular devotion to the mystery of her Immaculate Conception, and will never give up the task of composing a treatise that may promote its definition as an article of faith, soliciting it by all possible ways and means, even should I have to give my blood and my life for it. I will wear near my heart a small image of the

Immaculate Conception, with which I will bless the sick, and, taking it often in my hands, I will give vent to my sentiments, and will kiss it devoutly. I will never omit the daily devotions which are mentioned above ; and, besides them, I will make the Novenas of the Immaculate Conception, the Nativity and the Assumption. These will consist in reciting nine times the *Magnificat* with nine genuflections, making, at each genuflection, three acts, viz., of thanksgiving to the Most Holy Trinity for the graces granted to the Most Holy Mary ; of sorrow for my sins ; and of love for God and the Blessed Virgin. Before the other feasts of the Most Holy Mary, I will make a Triduum with the same prayers. I will also be devout to the Virgin Most Sorrowful, often thinking of her sorrows and compassionating her pains ; and for this purpose I will wear on my breast the above-mentioned little Cross with seven sharp points, as a local reminder of the Seven Dolors of this August Lady.

I will have a special devotion to my Guardian Angel, often entertaining myself with him, and asking his counsel in my doubts and his aid in all my spiritual exercises, so that he may, in due time, advise and remind me of all that I have resolved to do for the glory of God. But in a special manner I will invoke him before preaching and praying, that he may aid me to unite myself perfectly with God. Every evening I will recite the *Angele Dei* in his honor, that he may assist and defend me while I am resting, as I have resolved above ; and I will do the same thing in the morning, that he may assist me during the day.

I will help the Souls in Purgatory as much as I can, making a gift to them of the satisfaction of all my good works and of all the holy Indulgences that I may acquire in the form above-mentioned. And when the Mission will last for many days, I will preach with fervor the sermon on the "Holy Souls," in order that they may be succored by the faithful.

XXII. *The Virtue of Humility.*—The virtue of holy humility is the sister of the virtue of Religion ; with this difference, that the latter regards primarily the excellence of God, and secondarily our own vileness ; and the former regards primarily our vileness, and secondarily the excellence of God ; which means that we

must humble ourselves before God and men, to honor and exalt the excellence of God. But, alas! how far I have been, hitherto, from this beautiful virtue, without which all the others fall to the ground! I, therefore, resolve, with God's grace, to make a most special study of it, and to recommend myself often to God, in order to acquire, at least in some degree, this holy virtue of humility; and every day, at the noontime examination of conscience concerning the peace of heart, I will cast a glance into it, in order to see whether there has been any fault committed against this virtue; for all anxieties usually spring from some want of humility. I will distinguish two sorts of humility, viz., that of the understanding and that of the will. The first one makes me know my nothingness; the second makes me embrace contempt in all things. As to the first, it is self-evident that, if I regard myself in the natural order, physically and morally, everything shows clearly to me my nothingness and my vileness; the more so as God, Who does everything with sovereign counsel and infinite wisdom, caused me to be born poor and lowly and to embrace a poverty-stricken Order (for which very great benefit I thank Him with all my heart). He caused me to be born of a poor man, a sailor by occupation, of scanty means. All this helps me greatly to keep my head bowed down, and to make me look upon myself as the vilest of all men. But in regard to the supernatural; knowing that I am unable to form a good thought without a new, actual grace, makes me touch with my hand the absolute barrenness of my poor heart, wholly incapable of doing any good, except by the special influence of Divine grace. And if I cast a glance at the depth of my most grievous sins, I find it to be a bottomless abyss. Our holy Father St. Francis was wont to say, although exaggerating, that he was "the greatest sinner in the world." This I can say without any exaggeration, but with all truth and sincerity. If I find difficulty in really forming this opinion of myself, this fact in itself is the most evident sign that I am the proudest man in the world; because, having under my eyes so clear a truth, yet my pride blinds me and will not permit me to see it. But, with God's grace, I will no longer remain in blindness, but will lay down as the foundation of this virtue that there is in me only nothingness and sin.

Behold all my possessions in this world! nothingness and sin! But it is not sufficient to say it; one must also truly feel it in his heart; and this is what I ask of God—that I may always keep my head bowed, very much bowed. Yet this humility of the understanding does not suffice; for even the demons know their faults, and still they are proud. Hence, on my knees, bent to the ground, I beg the Lord, and I beg Him through the merits of our Father St. Francis, to grant me a true humility of will, that I may suffer contempt in all things, and understand that an atom of contempt is worth more than all the honors of the world. I am well aware that this is the bitterest mouthful for my proud nature; but, with God's grace, I am determined to swallow it by willingly suffering all contempts; and not only suffering them willingly, but seeking and going forward to meet them, nay, rejoicing in them when I find them. Though, whilst I am writing this, I hear an interior voice reproaching me for not telling the truth, or saying that I shall not be faithful to God in this; still I wish to take courage, intending that what I say shall be true and from my heart, and knowing that nothing is impossible to the grace of God, which I will ask often by the customary ejaculation, "My Jesus, mercy!" beseeching my God to grant me the grace to love every kind of contempt and scorn of men, objections and despisements of all sorts, embracing cheerfully all the little humiliations that will befall me during the day; for, being naturally distracted and ignorant of many things, awkward in doing anything, I therefore intend to reap from these an abundant harvest of humiliations and little contempts. When the occasion shall arise, I will humble myself without excusing myself, saying, in all sincerity: "It is true that I am a simpleton." And when any thought of pride, self-esteem or vanity shall arise in my mind, I will at once make a contrary act, banishing it immediately, just as one casts off the meanest thought, and I will ask for this the help of God, saying, as usual: "My Jesus, mercy!"

But, coming even more minutely to practice and not stopping at words only, I will endeavor, whilst in the Convent, willingly to occupy myself in the lowliest offices, such as sweeping, washing the dishes and helping the Brothers in every way I can. But,

above all, I will restrain my tongue by never speaking well or ill of myself; neither will I ever mention my having preached in Rome, or my happy successes in the Missions, except when necessary to authenticate the doctrine of our instructions and sermons, so that the people, knowing that these truths were approved in Rome, may hold them in due esteem; or, perhaps, when the telling may redound to the glory of God, I may relate something of the past Missions. Outside of these cases, in which I will acquit myself in a few words, I will be most cautious in speaking of myself; and this will be my constant and daily study, to watch and see that not a word savoring of pride and self-esteem escapes my lips. In this I will easily succeed if I shall keep a guard over my thoughts and my pride of spirit, which I have above resolved to do. But as to conversing with my brethren, the hardest rock to avoid will be my own judgment; and, though it is permitted to give one's opinion and present the reasons for it, yet it is not lawful to argue and hold obstinately to your own way, domineering over others. I know that though I make resolutions, still I shall fail many times; but this notwithstanding, I will not stop making these resolutions with all possible fervor and full deliberation; and, with God's grace, I resolve never to contest anything, even concerning matters good and virtuous; but, after having given my opinion with modesty, I will pinch my arm as a local reminder, and then will cease, renewing my resolution to speak low, and without imperiousness, but with modesty and piety on all occasions. Whenever I shall fail in this, as I, no doubt, shall, I will impose on myself the penance of making three crosses with my tongue on the floor; and I will fix this maxim deeply in my mind, that I will never attain to perfection and the holy union with God, without a most fervent love towards Him, and a supreme and most deep despisement of myself. Hence, I will often ask of God the efficacious grace to obtain these two virtues—Charity and Humility.

XXIII. *Charity towards our Neighbors—Alms—Confession—Preaching, etc.*—I resolve to exercise the virtue of Charity towards my neighbor (which is the countermark of the love of

God) on all occasions. And, in order not to fail in this, I will remember that the love of Charity is one thing, and the love of self-interest is another. To love our neighbor with the love of self-interest is to love one's self in the neighbor; but to love him with the love of charity is to love God in the neighbor, that is, to love our neighbor for the love of God and in relation to God. By the grace of God, I resolve to love my neighbor as if he were the image of God, and will do away with inclinations, sympathies, antipathies, kinships, dependencies, and the like motives which carry with them partiality and adulterate the holy Charity; the more so, because experience teaches me that men change at every step, and he who was a friend, upon a flimsy suspicion, becomes hostile and an enemy. Therefore, I intend to attach myself to God alone, Who never changes, and to love my neighbors without partiality, regarding in all of them the image of God. Nor does this prevent one from showing greater benevolence to a person who possesses more virtue, either because the virtue of gratitude requires it (as the Saints have shown us); or because it, redounding to God, does not dim the splendor of charity. Nay, I will abstain from assuming charge of carrying memorials to the Courts, stipulating marriages, placing persons at service and similar intrigues unbecoming my state, and which would prevent a greater good; except in certain cases, where good can be accomplished toward a person without danger; as, for instance, to give some advice, or recommend a poor person, when it can be done without preventing a greater good. When cases arise in which it will be impossible to help those who ask for assistance, I will endeavor to supply the lack by kind words, giving the refusal with good grace and with tokens of compassion and benevolence. In all cases, when I cannot assist my neighbor because of my poverty, I will daily dispense many alms, in intention; that is, when I shall meet a poor person, I will say: "If I possessed one hundred doubloons, and could do so, I would give all to this poor fellow." And of these alms I will give away many every day.

I will practice, spiritually, charity towards my neighbor, spending my whole life in doing works of love and spiritual mercy, and will strive to bring my neighbors back to the grace

of God; or, if they are already in the state of grace, to instruct them in order that they may still increase in this grace, which is the greatest, nay, the maximum good that can be done for them and the greatest service that may be rendered to God. In this work I will engage myself *ex toto corde*, sacrificing myself day and night in this holy office, busying myself always in hearing confessions, giving advice, healing enmities and preaching. Yet I will take care not to follow the bent of nature in this, but the movement of grace, often renewing the intention, pure and simple. And although I formerly felt a repugnance to giving Missions, now, however, that two Sovereign Pontiffs have assured me that such is the most holy will of God, and since Benedict XIV has even expressly imposed it on me, I sacrifice myself with a willing heart, hoping that I shall seek God only therein and not myself. Nay, I wish to die during a Mission, sword in hand, fighting against hell. But, in order that everything may be done ordinately in the holy Missions, I will see to it that the regulations made to avoid confusion be punctually kept, and that, above all, mental prayer, the examinations at noon and in the evening, the reading at meals and everything described in the above Regulations, and particularly everything concerning prudence in preaching and hearing confessions, be not omitted nor disregarded.

Hence, in order to give unto others good example, before ascending the platform to preach, I will prostrate myself with my face to the ground, adoring the Majesty of God, making an act of contrition for my sins and my faults, and, thus humiliated, I will form an act of diffidence in myself, pondering on this truth, viz., that the compunction of hearts and the conversion of sinners is the work of the all-powerful arm of God and the pure effect of grace. Consequently, I will think nothing of my ability, skill or learning, but, wholly distrusting myself, I will rise full of true confidence in God, begging of Him this alms, viz., that He vouchsafe to grant me the hearts of sinners, and will repeat several times: "My Jesus, mercy!" Then I will unite myself to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and from that Blessed Heart I will draw the fire of charity to inflame the hearts of all my hearers; placing all my words in that Sacred Side, so that, being steeped in the Blood of Jesus,

they may make an impression upon the hearts. This done, I will exorcise all the devils, ordering them, in the name of God Almighty, to withdraw from the audience, and not to dare to prevent the compunction of the hearers. To this end, I will recommend myself to my Patron St. Vincent Ferreri, in order that he may inspire me with that zeal and energy of speech which he possessed. I will likewise have recourse to all the Guardian Angels of the hearers, that they may assist me in moving each one of them, and I will say one *Our Father* and *Hail Mary*, that they may remove from all hearts any impediments to compunction. Then I will ask the blessing of the Most Holy Virgin, and will entreat her to bless my tongue and my heart; after this, I will go to the place where I have to speak. I will never preach without this previous recollection, knowing by experience that more impression is made by this means than through much study or other human efforts. I will be exact in hearing confessions, being more disposed to hear the poor than the rich, and will use greater precaution with women, never looking fixedly at them, keeping a curtain in front of the confessional, and never detaining them any longer than is absolutely necessary. I will endeavor, however, to receive the penitents with kindness, without scolding or growing impatient or embittering them in any way; hence, I will follow this rule, viz., I will treat them as I would like to be treated myself, if I should find myself in that state. Thus I will endeavor to act toward my neighbor, using benignity with all, especially with the simple, with poor old women and ignorant people; for these souls, ordinarily, are dearer to God. And if it be sometimes necessary to show authority and severity in correcting the obstinate and hardened, I will always do so in a manner that may not embitter them, striving always to send them away consoled. If, at any time, I shall not be able to absolve them, I will do my best to sweeten this bitter blow with gentle words that may satisfy the understanding and mitigate their pain. I will also watch over my companions, that nothing out of the way may happen, but that everything may proceed in good order. Finally, in the hope that, by my aiding the souls of others to attain eternal salvation, God will save my own soul, I firmly purpose never to draw back when it

is a question of lending spiritual assistance to some soul, but to be ready for it at all hours, unless there should be such an impediment that this could not be done without great trouble and the omission of more important works ; or, because of a still greater reason, if my Spiritual Father or Superior ordered the opposite. What I say of lay people, I intend to apply still more to Religious, loving them all as my brothers, and manifesting my love even outwardly by benign manners, doing, in this way, violence to my harsh and haughty disposition. I hope, with God's grace, to atone for my many past faults, and to treat everyone with benevolence and kindness, not only as I myself should like to be dealt with, but even better ; wishing others to be more saintly, more perfect and more favored in everything. I will beware lest I displease anybody in deeds or words ; and should this happen, even in the least thing, I will at once impose a penance on myself, such as making a Cross with my tongue on the floor, and will ask pardon withal of my Brother.

XXIV. *The Perfection of Virtues.*—In order to facilitate the practice of charity as well as that of other virtues, I will aim high, and purpose to practice the virtues in a heroic way ; and though, in practice, I shall never succeed, yet the resolution to practice them in the highest degree of their perfection will help me to remain not so far behind. I here note them briefly : First, I purpose to have faith as actual and vivid as though I could see with my own eyes the revealed mysteries ; nay, even more ; and I intend to hold them as true and certain with that same certitude wherewith God Himself knows them to be true. Second, I purpose to exercise hope with as great a confidence as if I were most sure of my eternal salvation, and as if I were already in Paradise, building my confidence to obtain grace and glory, and all blessings not contrary to my eternal salvation, on those four incontestable foundations, viz., God's justice, truthfulness, mercy and omnipotence, that is, because He owes it on account of the Blood our Divine Saviour Jesus Christ, our Lord, has shed for us ; because He promised it ; because He is merciful and all-powerful. Third, I purpose to practice charity towards God with all the fervor of the will in its inmost power,

simply on account of His infinite goodness. Though I should know as certain that I am to be damned, yet, notwithstanding this, I intend to love my God with a sovereign—most sovereign—love, solely because He deserves it; and in this I do not wish to be surpassed by anyone, but would desire to be able to equal the sovereign love of the great Mother of God herself. Nay, these acts of faith, hope and charity will be the ordinary nourishment of my heart, night and day, whether I be alone or in company, repeating them very often, either making them formally or in thought, and in a conventional manner, by saying: "I believe, I hope, I love," having the intention, once and for all, in saying these words, of making these acts with all formality. Fourth, I purpose practicing the virtue of religion, every moment, so to speak, giving to God the worship due to Him by my tongue, my heart and my body, kissing the ground, the crosses, the relics and sacred images, and kneeling before the Blessed Sacrament, or taking the holy water and making interior acts of adoration of God, saying: "My Jesus, mercy!" and the like ejaculations. In a word, I will endeavor never to be idle, either exteriorly or interiorly, but will try to be ever occupied in recognizing the Divine excellence and my miserable nothingness before God. Fifth, I purpose to exercise holy humility, not only in suffering and loving all humiliations, but even rejoicing at and desiring them; and I will be delighted to appear despicable in the eyes of all, demeaning myself as such with all, whom I will regard as superiors to myself in everything. Sixth, I purpose to keep the holy vows and practice charity towards my neighbor in the most eminent degree possible to me; to obey blindly in everything; to observe angelic purity and austerest poverty, and to love everyone most tenderly, more than myself. In a word, I resolve to practice all the virtues in all their greatest perfection, in the same manner and form in which the saints most eminent in virtue have practiced them. But I will never succeed in carrying out these resolutions during my lifetime without special grace from God, for, although they are good and holy, they must be founded on deep humility and diffidence of myself, whereby I may clearly confess and so interiorly feel that I am as far from these holy heroic virtues as heaven is from earth (it being but

too true, according to the sentiment of our Father St. Francis, that we are only just as much as we are before God, and nothing more; and that we only possess as much virtue as we show in practice by our deeds, and nothing more). All my present resolutions, without this clear knowledge and true sentiment, would only serve to feed my vanity and spiritual pride. Notwithstanding this, in my prayer, I will never fail to aim on high and to make resolutions to practice heroic virtues, that I may reach at least a moderate degree, as the Saints express it; for our good God is not pleased with anything but virtue, neither does He reward anything but it. Hence, I will labor to acquire it in some degree, and in this I will employ all diligence and strength.

XXV. *Recapitulation of the Principal Resolutions.*—To come more easily to the practice of the virtues, I will lay down a few practical points, in order to see, on the day of my Retreat, whether I shall have failed; and, upon finding that I have committed some faults, I will try to correct myself. These are the points: First, I resolve to practice complete resignation, accepting everything from the hands of Divine Providence, both in small and great occurrences; and, therefore, I will never trouble myself but I will keep my heart in peace, saying frequently: "*Fiat in me, de me, circa me et circa mea omnia, sanctissima, perfectissima et amabilissima voluntas Tua nunc, et deinceps in æternum. Amen*"—"Let Thy most holy, most perfect and most lovable will be accomplished in me, about me, around me and about all things mine." Second, I resolve to regard in my neighbor the image of God, and never to correct anyone who is in passion, but to await the opportune time; and, when necessary, to correct him with affection and benignity. Third, To bear the faults of my brethren, and commiserate their frailties without diminishing the good opinion to which they are entitled. Fourth, To take everything in good part, and, whenever possible, always to interpret favorably what I see or hear of my neighbors. Fifth, Never to speak ill of anybody, even in small matters; and never to blacken, even in the slightest degree, the good name of my neighbor. Sixth, And should I happen to hear evil of him, to take

his part at once by excusing him ; holding in mind this maxim : "Whoever injures his neighbor, injures God." Seventh, Never to dispute with anybody ; but after having stated, with modesty, my opinion, to keep silence and submit. Eighth, To receive sinners with calmness of spirit and with cheerfulness, never embittering them by harsh words, but employing every sort of kindness in order to win them to God. Ninth, To do good to all for the love of Jesus Christ, not looking for any other return but forgetfulness and ingratitude. Tenth, To visit the sick with charity ; particularly after the Mission, to hear their confession and to relieve them in all possible ways. Eleventh, Never to speak of things concerning myself, and never to say anything which might redound to my praise. Twelfth, Never to trust myself, as I know that I can only commit faults. Thirteenth, To hold as a truth that I am worse than a beast and should be treated as such by everyone. Fourteenth, Never to excuse myself when reprehended, but to say and acknowledge in my heart that I deserve worse. Fifteenth, Never to correct anybody without considering myself worse than he is. Sixteenth, Never to make use of words of authority or contempt, not even with those under me. Seventeenth, To flee and abhor all tokens of applause and esteem that may be given me ; and, on the contrary, to rejoice, at least, in the better part of my being, when I shall be treated with contempt. Eighteenth, Never to make known that I am a Missionary, in order to secure a more comfortable lodging in my travels ; but to relish the inconveniences of poverty, met with either in poor lodgings or scarcity of food, or the inclemencies of cold and rainy weather. Nineteenth, To cast myself at the feet of the priests, especially the parish priests, and ask their blessing before starting the Mission. Twentieth, To obey the Superior, as God on earth. Twenty-first, To obey even my companions in everything that shall not evidently be contrary to the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Twenty-second, In indifferent matters, to obey all persons, submitting, for the love of God, to their judgments. Twenty-third, To leave, delay or interrupt the Missions and any other work in order to follow the dictates of obedience. Twenty-fourth, To procure angelical purity, asking it frequently of God through the great Virgin,

and to abhor, as a most horrible stench, everything contrary to this holy virtue. Twenty-fifth, Never to look at women in the face, at least, not fixedly, and not to deal with them, except when necessary, and then to finish business with them quickly. Twenty-sixth, To esteem purity of conscience more than all the treasures of the world, and to hold for certain that a venial sin and a voluntary fault, in the line of evil, weighs more before God than, in the line of good, all the fruit that may ever come from all Missions possible. Twenty-seventh, To observe punctually the rules, the constitution and the ceremonies, not only in the Convent, but also outside of it; at least as far as possible. Twenty-eighth, To read the constitution and the ceremonies, and to note down all those things wherein I have failed in the past, and correct myself in all. Twenty-ninth, To wish to do everything possible to win many souls to God, willingly sacrificing my health, my rest and my very life. Thirtieth, Finally, I resolve to do everything through the impulse of Grace, and not through the movements of Nature, and, in order to discover when a movement is of Nature, and when it is of Grace, I lay down the following marks, which will aid me to be cautious in my actions.

XXVI. *Rules for Discerning Nature and Grace.*—In the first place, Nature, that all its actions may be well known, makes a show of and glories in them. But Grace always tries to hide them, wishes that they should be despised, and says, interiorly: "*Dilectus meus mihi et ego illi*"—"He is my beloved and I am his" (Cant. ii, 16). Secondly, Nature employs much solicitude in temporal things, seeks them with avidity, rejoices in their abundance, grieves in their penury. Grace, on the contrary, makes nothing of them, cares not for them; nay, despises them, and only wishes for the Sovereign Good, and in it alone finds peace. Thirdly, Nature is inconstant in good works; to-day doing, and to-morrow undoing; and, at every little difficulty, it succumbs and withdraws from good works But Grace looks to God and perseveres constantly in good works, both in times of prosperity and of adversity, generously continuing to go forward on the path it has entered. Fourthly, Nature is pleased with

itself; it seeks to know curious things, wishes for diversions and amusements with creatures, and is afraid to displease its body with a fear too solicitous and restless, because it dreads to lose its health. But Grace seeks only God's pleasure, treats the body as a little beast of burden, and declares that it desires only the sanctity of life here below. Fifthly, Nature intrudes even into spiritual things; it would wish always to enjoy pleasures and interior consolations, and to know that it is something grand before God. But Grace makes man humble, patient and just without his being conscious of it, and, seeking the pleasure of God alone, loves and serves Him courageously, even in the midst of aridities. Sixthly, Nature always goes to extremes, overstepping the limits of discretion; but Grace holds forth light to secure a safe medium, in order that neither more nor less be done than is convenient and obedience permits. Seventhly, Nature always seeks after interior or exterior delight, and opposes, with frivolous pretexts, anyone who may advocate mortification. But Grace seeks contempt, privations, sufferings, directing the inclination to God, Whom it strives to love in every manner and form, in order to fulfill in everything His most holy Will. Eighthly, The instinct of Nature inclines to all the seven deadly sins, or it raises us up to things high and sublime, both in the spiritual and in the temporal order; it inflates the heart and makes it wish for worldly applause and vainglory, persuading us to indulge ourselves in every possible manner. Its thoughts penetrate our hearts with a certain delicacy and sensual suavity, which deceives anyone who is not found vigilant and recollected in himself. But Grace opposes every swelling of the heart, presumption of spirit and gratification of the senses, whilst it always tends to humility, resignation, chastity and privations. From these marks or signs I will take my rule of conduct, in order to act always according to the inspiration of Grace, and not that of Nature, so that the very practice of virtue may not be falsified before God, and I may not find myself among the number of those who live in deception and take the appearance for the reality. Before beginning any work, I will ask for light, and will invoke the assistance of God by saying: "My Jesus, mercy!"

XXVII. *Presence of God.*—The seal of all these Resolutions of mine will be the Presence of God, trusting that, if I have my God constantly present before me and in my soul, I will also be faithful in keeping them. Hence, I will reflect that there are two kinds of God's presence ; the imaginative and the intellectual. The imaginative takes place when we imagine that we see Christ our Lord ; which may be done in two ways, viz., exteriorly or interiorly. The Presence of God made Man, exteriorly, is when we imagine Him outside of ourselves, *e. g.*, on Calvary. The Presence of God made Man, interiorly, is that whereby we represent Him within ourselves. When, therefore, I desire to meditate on the Passion of our good Jesus, I will, as a rule, make use of the interior method, imagining that I see Jesus suffering in my heart, and this will be particularly during the time of holy prayer. The intellectual Presence of God is that which is founded on faith ; and it takes place when one regards God as present in all things by His Essence, by His Immensity and by His Omnipotence ; this being not simple imagination, but an article of faith. This kind of God's Presence can also be practiced in two ways : The first by considering God as a sea of being, found in all things above, below and around us and everywhere, as the soul, so to speak, is in the whole body ; because God does everything, sees everything, ordains everything, and nothing can be done without Him, for everything depends on Him. This kind of God's Presence I will endeavor to practice outside the time of prayer, regarding myself as wholly immersed in God, in the same way that a sponge is in water, and looking at all things in God. The other kind of God's Presence is to regard God within us, as a most pure spirit, penetrating the whole soul, so that, as the clothes cover the body, and the body covers the soul (so to speak), likewise the soul holds within itself the great God, One and Triune. For it is most certain that God dwells in a particular manner in a soul living in the state of grace, as if on a throne, and finds His delights in it. Hence it is that a soul reconcentrated in itself, with the eyes of faith sees in itself the Majesty of God and all the Most Holy Trinity, at once most loving and most amiable. With this loving look it takes its flight for the simple and pure

elevation, forgetful of all creatures, alone with its God, loving Him quietly and peacefully in the obscurity of the faith, like two friends in a dark room conversing together, though they do not see each other.

Thus shall I, ordinarily, entertain myself with God in holy prayer; but, outside of the time of prayer, I will employ the other method, regarding God as present in all things, in order to command a local memory, that may awaken me to keep my God unceasingly present in my mind, I will make use of my tongue and of my hand. Of my tongue, every time I say: "My Jesus, mercy!" or else the ejaculation so familiar to our glorious Father St. Francis: "*Deus meus, et omnia!*"—"My God, and my All!"—and then I will give an interior glance at God, present within me and outside of me. I will also make use of the hand, as I have said in speaking of the Divine Office. Behold an easy and sweet method of thinking always of God, and of having Him always present—moving now one finger and now another. This I will do frequently, in hearing confessions, in preaching, in conversing, in traveling alone or with company, in various situations, in troubles and in temptations; having recourse now to my Guardian Angel and the Saints, now to the Most Holy Virgin, by moving the corresponding finger and making various acts, if there be an opportunity. If not, I now make the compact for the future, so that my loving God may know my good intention; and that will do.

From this actual Presence of God I must derive a deep modesty in all my actions, words and deportment, whether I be alone or in company, because of the sovereign reverence I owe to the Supreme Majesty of God. I will beware of falling into levities or of speaking foolishly, always maintaining a serious and devout mien, being led by the light of faith, which teaches me that it is more certain that God is continually present to me than that I am present to myself. Nevertheless, I will use discretion with regard to time and persons. Hence, conversing with the Religious, whether journeying, or in the orchard with the companions of the Mission, especially after dinner, I will adopt a holy joviality and cheerful affability; but with others, I will maintain greater reserve, and, in any case, will not allow

myself to fall into dissipation by frivolous manners and secular discourses ; thus, I will keep recollected, and never lose the peace of heart. I will examine myself every day in regard to this, as I have said above. But in order to succeed therein, I must needs make this Resolution, which is the last, though it should have been the first, on account of its great importance, viz., to say very little, and that little softly, and not to do anything in fury or haste, but with calmness of spirit and exterior composure. In this I will surely fail many times ; but just as often will I impose a penance on myself, that I may finally succeed, with God's grace, in amending my life. I beg, therefore, of my Spiritual Father, that, after having read these Resolutions of mine, he may give me his blessing, if he deems it right before God, in order that I may do everything with the merit of holy obedience, the Superior, to whose judgment I submit, concurring therein ; the Superior, being also understood to approve all that my Spiritual Father approves. All this I do in order to assure myself of God's most holy will, being now firmly determined to observe everything with greater exactness, as the time of my death is drawing nearer. For this reason I wished to renew and recopy these Resolutions for the last time, in order that I may be more exact in keeping them. And if, sometimes, through weakness, I shall fail to do so (which, alas ! will, no doubt, be the case), I will immediately impose a penance on myself ; and when I shall not be able to do anything else, I will make an Act of Contrition. Though I were to fall a hundred times, I purpose to repent just as many times and to arise without disquieting myself, bearing with my own frailties in the same manner in which I shall bear with those of a neighbor. Hence, humbling myself before God, I resolve to be more faithful to Him in the future, that my most loving God and the whole of Paradise may know that it is my will to observe all for His greater glory, seeking only His pleasure and approval. I implore, at the same time, my great Lady and Mother Mary most holy to bless these Resolutions of mine from heaven, whilst I place them all in her holy hands. I also recommend myself to my Seraphic Father St. Francis, to my advocate St. Vincent Ferreri, humbly begging of them to bless them ; as I have formed them with this particular object of imitating them.

and following them as closely as possible. And finally, I beg my Spiritual Father to bless them and subscribe himself in token of his approbation. Not being satisfied with the approval of my former Spiritual Fathers, I also beg the present, my actual confessor, as well as my extraordinary one, to assist me (in the absence of the others), and to be kind enough to sign their names, if they approve of them, as I sign myself, too, in token of my determination to observe them.

I, Fr.(1) Leonard, a poor sinner, intend and firmly resolve to observe all the above-described Resolutions, for the glory of God, the honor of Mary most holy, my Seraphic Father St. Francis and St. Vincent Ferreri, my advocates, and the other Saints my Patrons.

I, Fr. Fortunato, of Sarmato, chosen as his confessor, approve the above-written Resolutions, and pray that they may be blessed for him by the Lord, by His Most Holy Mother and Virgin Mary, and by our Father St. Francis.

I, Fr. Hyppolite, of Tirnavia, as his Spiritual Father, not only do confirm the above Resolutions, but, moreover, if he shall punctually observe them, I promise to him, on the part of God, of the Most Holy Virgin and of our Seraphic Father St. Francis, the eternal life, giving him, for my part, the holy blessing, whilst I pray and wish with all my heart that it may be ratified by them in heaven.

I, Fr. Mariano, of Nereto, his confessor, confirm the above-written Resolutions, and beg the Most Holy Virgin, St. Joseph, our Father St. Francis and all the Saints to obtain for him the grace to put them into execution.

I, Fr. Bernardine, of Florence, chosen as his extraordinary confessor and Spiritual Father (in the absence of the above ordinary confessor), confirm and bless all the above Resolutions, begging the Most Holy Virgin, our Father St. Francis, and St. Vincent to obtain for him the grace to observe them with exactness.

I, Fr. Jerome, of Pompejana, his confessor, with the blessing of the Lord, approve and confirm all the above.

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(1) Fr. here stands for *Frater—Brother.—Note of the Translator.*

I, Fr. Seraphim, of Rapallo, chosen as his extraordinary confessor, approve, confirm and bless the above-written Resolutions, and I pray the Most Holy Virgin and all the Saints, that they may obtain for him, from the Lord, the grace to observe them perfectly, for His glory and the accomplishment of His most holy will.

I, Fr. Joachim, of San Remo, chosen for his extraordinary confessor, confirm and approve the above Resolutions.

(Such were the Resolutions which St. Leonard made from the year 1717, whilst retired in the Solitude of the Incontro, and which were the rule of his life for the space of thirty-four years, viz., until the year 1751, when he died. From these it can be easily gathered with what fire of charity his soul was already inflamed from that time. These Resolutions he always jealously guarded in the sleeve of his habit, where they were found after his death. Nobody had ever known aught of this marvelous Compendium of Rules, which he had prescribed for himself. His confessors alone, at the time of his exercises, had been made acquainted with them ; because, presuming nothing of himself, he submitted them to their judgment and approval, without which he never undertook anything.)

THE PIOUS PRACTICE FOR A HOLY DEATH,

Taught by St. Vincent Ferreri, and added by St. Leonard at the end of his Resolutions.

Miserere mei, Deus, et exaudi orationem meam.

Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam infirmus sum, quoniam conturbata sunt ossa mea.

Miserere mei, Domine, vide humilitatem meam de inimicis meis.

Miserere mei, Deus, quoniam tribulor ; conturbatus est in ira oculus meus et venter meus.

Miserere mei, Deus, secundum magnam misericordiam tuam.

Miserere mei, Deus, quoniam conculcavit me homo, tota die impugnans tribulavit me.

Miserere mei, Deus, miserere mei; quoniam in te confidit anima mea.

Miserere mei, Domine, quoniam ad te clamavi tota die; lætifica animam servi tui, quoniam ad te animam meam levavi.

Miserere nostri, Domine, miserere nostri; quoniam multum repleti sumus despectione. Gloria Patri et Filio, etc.

Oratio.

Domine, Jesu Christe, qui neminem vis perire, et cui numquam sine spe misericordiæ supplicatur, nam tu dixisti ore sancto tuo et benedicto : *Omnia quæcumque petieritis in nomine meo fient vobis :* peto a te, Domine, propter nomen sanctum tuum ut in articulo mortis meæ des mihi integritatem sensus cum loquela, vehementem contritionem de peccatis meis, veram fidem, spem ordinatam, charitatem perfectam, ut tibi puro corde dicere valeam : *In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum; redemisti me, Deus veritatis, qui es benedictus in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.*

Oremus.

Deus, qui ad obstinata peccatorum corda per evangelicam prædicationem ad pœnitentiam flectenda, beatum Leonardum, Confessorem tuum, admirabili sanctitate et invicto dicendi robore suscitasti, da, quæsumus, ut contritionis lacrymas, ad quas, ob duritiam cordis nostri, sine te moveri non possumus, per ejus preces ac merita consequamur. Per Dominum nostrum, etc.

Translation of the preceding Pious Practice and Prayers.

Have mercy on me, O God, and hear my prayer.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak, for my bones are troubled.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, see my humiliation, which I suffer from my enemies.

Have mercy on me, O God, for I am afflicted, my eye is troubled with wrath, my soul and my belly.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy.

Have mercy on me, O God, for man hath trodden me under foot; all the day long he hath afflicted me, fighting against me.

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for my soul trusteth in Thee.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I have cried to Thee all the day; give joy to the soul of Thy servant, for to Thee I have lifted my soul.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us; for we are greatly filled with contempt.

Glory be to the Father, etc.

Prayer.

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who dost not wish anyone to be lost, and to Whom one never prays without the hope of finding mercy, because with Thy holy and blessed mouth Thou hast said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in My name it shall be done to you," I beseech Thee, O Lord, for Thy Holy Name, that, at the point of my death, Thou mayest grant me complete use of my senses, with speech, deep contrition for my sins, true faith, reasonable hope, perfect charity, so that, with a pure heart, I may be able to say: "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit; Thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth, Who art blessed forever and ever. Amen."

Let us pray.

O God, Who, in order to bend to penance the hardened hearts of sinners through the evangelical preaching, hast raised the Blessed Leonard, Thy Confessor, and endowed him with wonderful sanctity and undaunted strength of speech, grant us, we beseech Thee, through his prayers and merits, those tears of contrition, to which, without Thee, on account of the hardness of our hearts, we cannot be moved. Through our Lord, etc.

The Feast of St. Leonard of Port Maurice is celebrated on November 27th. A relic of the same Saint is venerated in St. M. M. De-Pazzi's Italian Church, Philadelphia.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

AND

RESOLUTIONS MADE BY ST. LEONARD, IN HIS NAME AND IN THE NAME OF HIS BRETHREN, WHEN HE WAS GUARDIAN IN THE CONVENT OF FLORENCE.

The Religious of the house of Retreat of the Province of Franciscan Recollects of Tuscany have formally chosen You as their Mother. To-day, humbly casting themselves before the throne of your Majesty, filled with filial confidence, they make known to You, in the simplicity of their hearts, that, being animated with a most earnest wish to increase your glory more and more, they cannot fully attain their object unless they devise some new means of worthily honoring the most important of your prerogatives, viz., your most pure, most holy and Immaculate Conception; in order that they may procure thereby an increase of glory to You, and likewise an increase of joy to your Amiable Heart.

They are well aware that a heart enamored of virtue is all they can offer, which will be most agreeable to your Majesty. And in return for the graces they desire and expect to receive from your bounty, which always manifests itself by the abundant favors bestowed on your devoted servants, they humbly present to You the tribute of four Offerings, in order to obtain the graces particularly necessary to their state. They are well aware of the small value of their gifts compared to the recompense and reward to which they aspire; but they confide in the inexhaustible sources of your liberality, which never grow less by what You dispense. Their confidence in You, as a Mother, dear to them for many reasons, is so great, that they hope to obtain even more than they ask or desire. The Offerings they place in your hands consist of four Resolutions, and these Resolutions regard the observance of the four virtues, which secure the fulfillment of what is required by the Order and bring peace to their hearts.

The *First Resolution* requires that each one should keep the evangelical silence, of which he makes profession, being gener-

ously and heartily determined to place a restraint on his tongue, never to speak in forbidden places or during the hours of silence, never to utter a syllable against charity, having always before his eyes the maxim of St. Augustine : "Never say little or much of other persons' affairs;" and particularly not to relate to others (to the detriment of religious peace) the jokes, jests or gossip that may be in circulation, but simply acquaint the Superior, if there be any disorder to be remedied.

Second Resolution.—In order to be better able to practice penance and mortification, everyone should resolve on no account to yield to the cravings of the stomach, except in so far as it is necessary to sustain nature, conformable to what is so wisely prescribed in our Constitutions ; never to eat or drink between meals, except in case of real necessity ; and to be pleased with whatever Divine Providence supplies us with through the cook, never complaining that the food is not good or tasty ; never to speak of what concerns the meals, but to endure silently every privation, stifling all repugnance that one might feel and which would tend to disturb the peace of the heart.

Third Resolution.—In order to be truly able to practice that humility so much recommended by your Adorable Son, and so appropriate to their state of poverty, all, and each one in particular, declare they will wage an incessant war against pride, vainglory, ambition and boasting. They heartily resolve to oppose the elation of the mind, and will check, by interior acts, the least desire of being known, praised or applauded by men. More than that, they form a resolution not only not to seek superiority, or anything approaching it, but to renounce it whenever it is offered, and to rejoice at being thrown aside, like a useless piece of wood. In order to imitate the admirable humility of your heart, they resolve never to utter a word in their own behalf, to despise the vain esteem of men, and to be content to be judged for what they really are before God.

Fourth Resolution.—In order to be better able to honor your perfect Purity, they form the firm Resolution to observe with all possible rigor the vow of chastity they have made. Hence, not satisfied with holding in horror everything contrary to the holy virtue of purity, they will avoid even the slightest danger or

stain, no matter how light it may be. Therefore, they propose to observe the greatest modesty in looks, in words and in actions. They will abstain from looking at improper objects, at least fixedly ; they will never allow an equivocal word to escape their lips, nor any allusion to things contrary to the holy vow. They will flee from all familiarity with suspected persons, or from anything that might sully the beauty of purity. In a word, they are determined rather to be cut in pieces than ever to commit a sin, either by thought, word or deed, against a vow so sacred ; and they now wish to renew it in your hands, being firmly resolved rather to shed the last drop of their blood than ever transgress it.

Such are, August Mother, the offerings which the Religious of this poor Retreat, with their face to the dust, humbly dare to lay at your feet. Ah ! deign to cast your eyes full of mercy on them ; grant them those loving thoughts that fill heaven with joy ; pour upon them a renewed spirit, necessary strength and energy to practice faithfully what they have resolved in your honor, and with the desire of giving homage to your Immaculate Conception, grant them the following four graces :

First, Never to commit a deliberate mortal or venial sin, and to avoid, as much as possible, every imperfection to which they may be particularly subject.

Second, Final perseverance in the good they have begun ; and also the precious grace of living and dying in our Holy Order.

Third, A great zeal for the regular observance, together with an earnest desire of advancing daily in perfection.

Fourth, To maintain the Institute in its primitive rigor, never neglecting the least rule. They, therefore, entreat You to recall thereto the Religious dead to themselves, who approve and uphold the pure, complete and perfect observance.

These are, O August Queen, the four favors that the Religious of this Retreat desire of You. Deign to bless this supplication by granting them what they humbly ask for the greater glory of your Divine Son and the honor of your Immaculate Purity. Do not look at their miseries, O Amiable Mother, except to bestow your mercy on them. All their confidence

reposes in You. It is in your Sacred Heart they have to expand the ardor of their desires ; You are their refuge ; they venerate You under that title, O Powerful Queen. They hail You from this valley of tears, joining their affectionate homage with that of the blessed in heaven and of all your faithful servants on earth. As a sign of their perpetual subjection and the humble devotedness they profess in your regard, they wish to renew, to-day, the vow they have already made—of defending, even at the price of their blood, your Immaculate Conception, that august mystery which draws to You the everlasting veneration of all the elect. They end by sighing for the graces they ask, and implore your holy blessing.

APPENDIX II.

SHORT INSTRUCTION ON THE WAY OF THE CROSS

BY

ST. LEONARD OF PORT MAURICE.

THE holy exercise of the *Via Crucis*, which, in reality, is but a sorrowful representation of that painful journey which our loving Jesus made from the house of Pilate to Calvary, was always held in veneration by the faithful with great devotion. Unable to go personally to Jerusalem, they visit the Stations of the Way of the Cross, wherein those holy places are represented. It is called *Via Crucis*, because this journey was undertaken by the Redeemer when the perfidy of the Jews placed upon His shoulders the most heavy wood of the Cross. It is also customary to call it *Strada Dolorosa*, the Sorrowful Way, because such a painful journey, according to contemplative Saints, was the most atrocious martyrdom that was endured by that Sacrosanct Humanity, already so torn by so many preceding torments. Behold then, what it is to practice the Way of the Cross; it is the same as to contemplate with tenderness of heart all those insults and pains which our most loving Jesus suffered under the weight of the Cross, from the house of Pilate up to Calvary. It is divided into Fourteen Stations, because every Station and Cross corresponds to one of those pious places where the agonizing Jesus, progressing on His journey, was compelled to pause. Hence, this is called "Station," from "staying;" that is, from the stopping of Jesus at that place. As in journeying from the house of Pilate to the Holy Sepulchre He stopped fourteen times—that is, twelve while alive and to the last two He was carried dead—therefore, behold the reason why there are Fourteen Stations and Fourteen Crosses.

Many writers have treated of this holy exercise, and, more than all, Adricomio, who, in his book "*In Descriptione Hierusalem*," No. 118, ascribes to the Blessed Virgin the beginning of this pious practice with these words: "*Pia habet traditio majorum, Beatam Virginem qua cum suis cruenta Filii vestigia ad Crucem usque secuta fuit, post Ejus sepulturam huc redeuntem, primam* Viam Crucis *ex devotione calcasse; unde et Christianorum processiones, ac Crucis gestationes originem habere videntur*"—"Pious tradition of our ancestors has it that the Blessed Virgin, who had followed with her own the bloody footsteps of her Son up to Calvary, after His burial, returned there, thus being the first to make, through devotion, the Way of the Cross; whence it seems that the Processions of Christians and the carrying of the Cross originated." This motive alone ought to suffice to make every devout soul love so holy an exercise, viz., to know that it was not invented by some Saint, but by the Queen of Saints. It was the idea of the sorrowful Heart of Mary ever Virgin, who, throughout all the time She survived the death of her Son (as She revealed it to St. Bridget), performed daily this holy exercise, visiting those holy places the Blessed Jesus had consecrated with His pains: "*Omni tempore post Ascensionem Filii mei visitavi loca in quibus Ipse passus est et mirabilia sua ostendit*"—"Every day, after the Ascension of my Son, I visited those places where He had suffered, and manifested His wonders" (Revel. lib. vi, cap. vi). Now, if the great Virgin performed every day the *Via Crucis*, how can we keep from resolving, all of us, to practice it with the greatest frequency possible? Begin, then; in order to encourage all of you to perform often the Way of the Cross, I know of no more efficacious means than to place before your eyes the devout manner in which (as I think) the most holy Mary practiced so holy a devotion. Now, let us do so; pay attention well.

Imagine that you see the Sorrowful Lady, who, accompanied by the devout Marys and other faithful of the primitive Church, goes visiting one by one those holy Stations. Oh! how many tears She sheds upon that ground! How many tender kisses She imprints on those stones! How many sobs and sighs come out of her sorrowful Heart! Behold Her, all of you, behold

Her! She has arrived at the house of Pilate, which is the First Station.

Now, here She breaks out into these dolorous words: "Alas! my dear Jesus! Alas! what anguish for my heart! I remember that here Thou hast been condemned to death by that impious Governor; here Thou hast been rejected for a highway assassin; here, for sinners, Thou didst accept the iniquitous sentence of death. Ah! Son, dear Son, who tore Thee away from my poor heart?" After a brief pause, She continues her journey and soon reaches the Second Station, where Jesus received the Cross on His shoulders. "Behold the place," the disconsolate Lady says, "where my Jesus, crowned with most piercing thorns, surrounded by a heartless rabble, received upon His weakened shoulders that most heavy wood of the Cross. O Cross! O Cross! how heavily Thou weighest upon my distressed soul!" She kisses that sacred place, and, having given vent to her sorrow in tears, She proceeds to the Third Station, where Jesus fell, for the first time, to the ground. And here the Sorrowful Virgin kneels down, and, weeping bitterly, She says: "Behold the spot, where my Jesus, dragged like a vile beast of burden by the heavy chain they had placed around His neck, unable to stand any longer the violence of those barbarians, fell, crushed by that most heavy wood of the Cross, and bespattered with His blood all these stones and rocks. Ah! rocks and stones, how was it you did not break through sorrow?" Then She arrives at the Fourth Station, where She met her dear Jesus. "Ah! here is the place," She goes on to say, melting in tears, "where I met that blessed Son of mine; here I threw my arms around His neck; here we spoke to each other, heart to heart; here we both made our pains known to each other; alas! why did I not expire then from the great anguish?" When She arrives at the Fifth Station, where the Cyrænian helped Jesus to carry the Cross, Mary exclaims: "Alas! The relief given to my Son by those barbarous people was not because of compassion, but from consummate cruelty; because, enraged as they were, they wished to see Him alive—alive, nailed to the wood of the Cross. And this it was that greatly increased the pain and anguish of my Son and mine also."

After a long walk the Blessed Virgin arrived at the Sixth Station, where Veronica wiped the face of Jesus. "Behold," Mary says, "where the pity of Veronica afforded so much relief to my Son, wiping His Sacred Face, which was all covered with sweat and blood, and, as a reward of her pity, she carried away, imprinted in her heart, even more than in the handkerchief, the portrait of my Son."

Having arrived at the Seventh Station, where Jesus fell the second time under the Cross: "Behold," says the agonizing Lady, "that stone against which my dear Son struck His Divine Head in falling. Alas! those thorns, being thus pressed in more and more, caused rivulets of blood to run anew, and here He nearly expired from most cruel pain!" The Sorrowful Lady kisses that stone, and, advancing many steps, arrives at the Eighth Station, where Jesus consoled the women of Jerusalem. "See," Mary goes on to say, "what a good Heart my Jesus carried in His breast. In this place, having totally forgotten His own pains, He undertook to console those poor women, who, sorrowing and weeping, accompanied Him up to Calvary!"

Then She reaches the Ninth Station, where, for the third time the Blessed Jesus fell to the ground. "Alas!" Mary says, "behold the place where my Son, falling the third time to the ground, was set upon by the rabble, who, with blows and kicks, and, striking Him with the handles of halberds, dragged Him through the mud! Alas! He well-nigh expired under so fierce a storm of ill-treatment and torture." Then She arrives at the Tenth Station, where Jesus was stripped of His garments. "Here is the place," Mary says, "where my meek Son was stripped of His holy garments; nay, like an innocent little lamb, He was flayed alive, without ever opening His mouth to complain of such barbarous treatment!" Then She reaches the Eleventh Station, where Jesus was nailed to the Cross. "Here," says the afflicted Mary, "my Jesus was stretched upon that hard bed of death, and with harsh and blunt nails, which to Him transfixed the hands and feet, and to me the heart, was hammered and nailed to the Cross."

When She arrives at the Twelfth Station, on top of Calvary, where the Cross was erected, on which the Crucified Saviour

hung, here the Sorrowful Mother stops longer than at any other place, having become a statue of sorrow; She raises her eyes, imagining that She sees her dear Jesus suspended from three nails, and, all tears and sighs, She exclaims: "Here is the place where my agonizing Son called me from the Cross, bade me the last farewell, and here I was constrained to see Him give up the ghost under my very eyes. Alas! how was it I did not, then, faint, and draw my last breath for the great sorrow, the extreme anguish!"

Then leaving the spot where the Cross had been erected, She goes to the Thirteenth Station, where they had carried to and placed on her lap her Jesus lifeless and dead. "In this place," Mary says, "I received in my arms that sacred burden. Here with my hands I fixed slowly, slowly, that sacred skin all torn and hanging. Here with my tears I washed those sacred wounds. Here at the sight of those wounds all my pains were renewed!" She finally arrives at the Holy Sepulchre, which is the Last Station; and here the Sorrowful One utters but one word: "Behold that Sepulchre which robbed me of my dear Jesus!" And, this said, She breaks out into a most copious weeping. Alas! at the sight of that afflicted Mother crying, the devout Marys weep also, all those devout faithful weep, the Angels, spectators of that scene, weep; and I think the stones of the Holy Sepulchre must have wept; as they were honored by that most holy Mother with the tenderest kisses, according to St. Bede, who says: "*In eisdem locis etiam lacrymas fundebat et suavissimi oris sui oscula dulcissima imprimebat*"—"In those same places She shed tears and imprinted the sweetest kisses with her most sweet lips."

Behold, Christians, the original of the most devout exercise of the Way of the Cross, invented by Mary most holy, practiced by her, and, by her left as a legacy to her devout followers. It may then well be said that the *Via Crucis* is the mother of all other devotions; because, of all others, it is the oldest, the most holy, the most pious, the most excellent, the most divine; and therefore, with all reason, it is entitled to precedence over them all.

The excellence of so devout an exercise renders it wonder-

fully agreeable in itself; but the great advantages it carries with it make it very profitable to us. Who will ever be able to understand the graces, the fruits and the great merits that every devout soul draws from the practice of so holy an exercise? Say it without hesitation, say it, that the "Way of the Cross is a very rich mine," wherefrom immense blessings are drawn for the benefit of the people; for it is profitable for the just; it is profitable for sinners; it helps the living; it helps the dead; it helps in time; it helps in eternity, on account of the great merit accruing to us, and the great pleasure given to God, which Jesus Himself made known to one of His servants, who, with burning and reiterated sighs, wished to know what homage would be most acceptable to Him. Jesus appeared to him with the Cross on His shoulder, and thus spoke to him: "My son, help me to carry this Cross; meditate always on my Sorrowful Passion in the exercise of the *Via Crucis;* and you will give My Heart the sweetest pleasure." Is it any wonder, then, that all the Holy Fathers exalt to the stars this holy exercise of Paradise? St. Bonaventure says that there is no practice of piety causing more noble effects of sanctity than the practice of the Way of the Cross. Blosius asserts that Our Lord confided to one of His servants, that He does not find in the world anything that pleases Him so much as to see a soul practicing with devotion the Way of the Cross. Taulerus writes that it was revealed to a Servant of God, that whosoever shall practice the devotion of the Way of the Cross will receive from the Lord new graces and new, most special favors, which, for brevity's sake, I omit. I will only mention the last one, which is, that Jesus Himself will appear to him at the hour of death, will assist him in the last conflict, defending him from all the infernal enemies, so that he may save his soul. Oh, most precious grace! Oh, inestimable favor!

And yet of even greater weight is what Blessed Albert the Great affirms; listen to him, and let so noble a sentiment never leave your mind. This holy Doctor, then, says, that one merits more by a single thought on the Passion of Jesus, and consequently by a single performance of the *Via Crucis*, than by fasting every day for a year upon bread and water; and that one

merits more by making the Stations of the Cross than by disciplining himself to blood several times; that one merits more in making the Stations than by reciting the whole of the Psalter; and finally, that one merits more by making the Stations of the Cross than by going barefooted to St. James of Gallicia. What do you say now? Does not the opportunity to get so rich a harvest of merits, which so profitable a devotion throws into your lap, win your heart? See now whether Father Gavarri, a most famous Missionary, was not perfectly right in saying that one merits more by performing once the Way of the Cross than by reciting a hundred Rosaries, when these are recited without thinking on the mysteries, as many do. The reason is that whoever performs the Way of the Cross must necessarily reflect on the mysteries represented by the Stations, which he sees before his eyes, as these are sensible and pitiable objects, drawing the heart and moving it to compunction and true contrition. This was the principal motive for which Clement XII, of holy memory, was pleased to increase the Indulgences granted to this holy exercise, because he regarded it as the easiest means to introduce among the people the habit of meditating, which is the source of all our good, and which delights our Redeemer so much.

But if so great an amount of merits and so precious a treasure of spiritual blessings, which will weave for you a beautiful crown in eternity, fail to move you, let, at least, your temporal interest do it, inasmuch as the Way of the Cross is not only useful for eternity, but in the present time as well, according to what Jesus Himself clearly stated to the mother of the Antigua, above alluded to: "Hearken, my daughter! For a single soul that will practice with devotion the Way of the Cross, I will protect the whole people where my Passion will thus be revered, and will deliver them from all the temporal punishments they shall have deserved for their sins." Ah! blessed, if such be the case, thrice blessed that people where, not a single person, but many and many will devoutly practice the Way of the Cross! From how many hail storms, earthquakes, pestilences and other similar misfortunes will such a people be immune! See now whether it is not more than true that the *Via Crucis* is a very rich mine, whence even all temporal blessings are extracted. Try it in your infirmities,

necessities and troubles; go yourselves, or see that others go and practice this holy exercise of the Way of the Cross, and you will derive great relief therefrom. I beg everyone to ponder on these very great advantages, and to resolve to choose this holy exercise for his dearest devotion, and to endeavor to induce others to share in so great a good.

This very salutary exercise, approved of by Holy Church, through the reiterated Constitutions of the Venerable Innocents XI and XII, of Benedicts XIII and XIV and of Clement XII by his Brief "*Exponi nobis*," published January 16th, 1731, extended to the whole Catholic world, is constantly practiced by persons of every condition, and is enriched by very many Indulgences, free, perpetual, and without any difficult conditions; it not being necessary to confess and receive Holy Communion, but it is sufficient to be in state of grace, in order to gain them daily, and even more than once a day, *toties quoties*, just in the same manner that the Indulgences granted to the Way of the Cross of Jerusalem are gained.

"But, Father," some one will ask, "what are the conditions necessary to acquire so great a treasure?" These are chiefly three: The first is to be in the grace of God. Anyone in state of sin cannot gain it for himself, but, according to the opinion of many theologians, may gain it for the holy souls in Purgatory. The second is to visit, one after the other, the Stations, as far as the multitude of the persons visiting them, and the capacity of the place where they are erected, may permit. The third is to think on the Passion of Jesus Christ, according to one's own ability, as it is gathered from the above-mentioned Constitutions. Hence, the recitation at every Station of the versicle, "*Adoramus, te, Christe*"—"We adore Thee, O Christ,"—the *Our Father* and the *Hail Mary*, with the versicle, "*Miserere nostri, Domine*"—"Have mercy on us, O Lord,"—is simply a pious and praiseworthy custom, introduced by the devout people in visiting the Stations of the Cross. This was declared by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgences in the rules to be observed when practicing this devotion of the Way of the Cross, published by order and with the approbation of the Sovereign Pontiffs Clement XII and Benedict XIV, May 10th, 1742.

As to the number of these Indulgences it has been decreed by the same Sacred Congregation that no precise number should be proclaimed; but that this only be said, viz., that whoever will perform the Stations of the Cross with devotion will gain the same Indulgences as if he personally visited the Stations of the *Via Crucis* of Jerusalem; which are very many, both plenary and not plenary, applying one for himself, and the others for the holy souls in Purgatory. And this means that whenever you go through this holy exercise, you may every time deliver many souls from Purgatory and send them to the holy Paradise. Remember this, though, that you must make this application in the beginning of this exercise, or, at least, before it ends; because, once concluded, the application would not be of any use. Never forget this point, which is of the greatest importance.

As to the sick and those Christians who are in the prisons, or on the sea, or in the regions of the heathen, or who cannot possibly visit the Stations of the *Via Crucis* erected in the churches, or in the public oratories, these may gain the above-mentioned Indulgences by reciting fourteen *Our Fathers* and *Hail Marys;* and, afterwards, five more *Paters* and *Aves* and *Glorias*, and one *Our Father* for the Sovereign Pontiff, keeping in their hands a brass or yellow copper Crucifix that had been previously blessed by the Father General of the Order of the Minor Observants, or by the Father Provincial, or by a Father Guardian, subject to said Father General.(1) This favor was granted by Clement XIV, January 26th, 1773, at the instance of the Reformed Friars Minor of the Retreat of St. Bonaventure in Rome, who preserve the decree in their archives.

And here it must be noted that such a Crucifix, after having been blessed, can neither be sold, nor given away, nor lent to others with a view to their gaining the Indulgences of the Way of the Cross, conformable to the reiterated decrees of the Sacred Congregation, quoted before. To render this exercise of the Way of the Cross more easy, and to extend it to those persons who cannot personally perform it in the churches and the public oratories where the Stations are erected, Pius VII, by his Brief

(1) Or by a Missionary Priest, in virtue of his faculties.

of January 10th, 1804, and Pius VIII, likewise, by his Brief of November 23d, 1830, granted to the persons above named the same Indulgences, by visiting the Fourteen Stations, already engraved in copper by Pietro Bombelli in Rome, and collected in a book, provided that in each book there be printed the decree of such favor, subscribed to by the Father General of the Order of the Reformed Friars Minor of St. Francis, or by the Father Commissary General of said Order, etc. ; as may be gathered from said Briefs.

Behold the short and most easy mode to acquire the Indulgences, and to escape, as much as possible, the terrible fire of Purgatory. Practice, then, very frequently, and even daily, this holy exercise of the Way of the Cross, and for this advice you will thank me in the blessed eternity. Amen !

THE END.

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